THE
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OR,
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IN A
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A Novel.

ſlated from the French
a Woman of Quality.

LONDON,
d for *R. Bentley*, in *Ruſſel-*
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THE Amorous Abbeſs: OR, LOVE IN A Nunnery.

PARIS being in its greateſt Solitude, by reaſon of the King's Abſence, when He was following the Wars in *Flanders*; the Seaſon of the Year

and the Novelty of the thing, invited certain Persons of Quality to a retreat in the Country; who had Souls so well fitted for Conversation, that having given the first part of the day to other noble Divertisements, such as the place afforded them variety of, they spent their Evenings in discoursing upon the Passions, and other things, which even in Deserts people of Sense may find entertainment in. But one night their Pleasures were interrupted, or rather, to speak more properly, varied by the arrival of the Post with Letters to several in the Company, and 'twas the general proposal, they should be read publickly, for the common satisfaction. — Monsieur *Le Chevalier*, one whose Wit render'd him not the least considerable amongst them, received that which follows.

IT is two Months since I had any Letter from you; from whence pro-

proceeds this silence? Have you so much forgot me, or has any Misfortune happen'd to you? Ah! how cruel are you? Tell me if there be any that has a greater Interest than I, in all that relates to you; and whether you ought to neglect me at such a rate, as to believe you owe me not at least this satisfaction. Alas! you love me not, since you can be thus long and not tell me you do. I find too unhappily, that all the marks you have given me of your Tenderness, were but purely an effect of your Wit; your Heart had no share in them, at least they proceeded from Complaisance rather than Kindness, and were more the effects of Gratitude than Inclination: for I cannot imagine how a man can love (after the manner that I understand Love) and live as you do. You know, that you promised me in leaving this place, to give me an account of your Life every eight days. I suffer-

ed my self to be so pleasingly flatter'd with it, that it enabled me to bear more easily the first days of your absence. There is nothing more easie than to abuse the credulity of a Heart that loves one, but there is nothing more base, and unworthy. I endeavour'd to comfort my self for your departure, after a continued happiness, as your Presence gave me, by the pleasure I expected in a converse by Letters, which would further engage Us: But you have allow'd me that Pleasure but a short time; what have I done? and why had you not told me, that absence was a destroyer of Friendship in you? Then perhaps I should have been prepared for it, and not found my self under the necessity of making complaints to you, of your self. Endeavour to justifie your self if you can, or deceive me by some false Reasons. I am even desperate to think you Criminal, and not to find an Excuse for

your

your Ingratitude, Adieu. *Neglect not any thing to make me believe you are Faithful, and that you have not wronged me*, Adieu.

The Company were so well pleased with this Letter, that they would not be satisfied without knowing upon what occasion it was writ; and Monsieur *Le Chevalier* with some difficulty, was brought to make the following Relation.

It is some time since, That I made a Journy a considerable distance from *Paris*, where I was call'd by my affairs: But being the first time I was in that Country, it is no wonder I lost my way. This misfortune happened to me when I least thought of it; and I perceiv'd my Error too late to remedy it; for as it was dark, I found my self in the midst of a Wood, where the farther I went, the more I was intangled, and out

of hopes to get out. — In fine, the Weather being very bad, and the ways worse, I concluded it best to take my Lodging under a Tree, rather than expose my self to a thousand Accidents I might meet with in passing Rivers and ill ways, at such a time of Night. I need not tell you the little pleasure there is in being reduced to this Extremity; but it made me hope it would be the last Adventure of Knight-Errantry, that would ever happen to me.

Whilst I was entertaining my self with these unpleasant Thoughts, a Peasant, who by happy chance pass'd that way to his own House, came pretty near me; I sent my Servant to desire him to come to me, whom we engaged by good Words and Promises to guide us to some Inn. — He told us, that we were three Leagues out of our way, and that he knew of no Lodging, but a League off, by the most detestable way

way in the World. —— We arrived at last at a little Village, where there was but one house of Accommodation. God knows how ill I was Treated there, after having Knockt an hour at the door, to oblige our Host to rise; who, after all, would not open it, but upon the Faith of our Guide, who swore we were honest people: The Peasant stayed with us, and eat, and drank with us, and lay in the same house. I, that had but a little miserable Straw for a bed, and a couple of vile Coverlets, pass'd not the Night so well as he, but better however than I should have done in the Wood. The trouble, and weariness, I had endured, supplied the want of a better Lodging, and served me at last for a Pillow, so that about break of day I fell asleep. I had not slept two hours when the Peasant entered my Chamber, and waked me, very briskly to tell me,

that Madam the *Abbess* expected me. I received this Complement with a very wicked Air, and knew not what he meant by this Madam the *Abbess*, and was in a mind to have forgot the obligation I had to him the night before: The poor man knew well, by the reception I made him, that I was not pleased, although he designed to do me Service; he went out to carry my Answer to the Person that sent him: But for my part, I could not possibly recover my Sleep, and thought only of what this Man had said to me, that an *Abbess* askt for me: I knew none in that Country, yet believed there might be some Convent there-abouts; but could not divine, why they should send for me, unless they took me for another. VVhatsoever it was, I confess that I made but an ill return to this Civility; and if the Peasant was of an humour to

tell

tell all he saw, and the displeasure which I discovered when I sent him back, this *Abbess* had as much cause to complain of me, as I had reason to praise her: This reflection began to give me a little trouble, out of which I was delivered by the coming of the Almoner of this Lady, to tell me, with a little more Ceremony, that the Lady *Abbess*, to whom this Village did belong, being informed by her Shepherd, that a Man of Quality that had lost his way, was constrained to take up in that miserable Inn, had sent him to intreat me to accept of a Lodging less incommodious than that was. This Complement brought some allay to my trouble; and I was in Charity with my Peasants, since he procured me this honour that the *Abbess* did me; I answered the Almoner the most civilly that was possible, and desired him to tell his Lady, that I had the most acknow-

knowledging Sentiments in the World for the favour she did me; and that I would come my self immediately to assure her of it: My Man was up, and I made him give me Cloaths better than ordinary, and with Gallantry enough prepared for this Visit. The Peasant that served me for a Guide here, conducted me thither also. I was brought into the Parlour where I stayed not long for her coming.

I think it is best before I proceed further, to give you a description of this *Abbess*: You must imagine her to be a Lady of about twenty eight years old, of an indifferent Stature, but well made; her Hair fair and thick; her Eyes blue and sparkling; her Mouth admirably well; her Nose very handsome, and her Teeth passable, with the shape of her Face so round and charming, that to say Truth, it was more fit to inspire Love than Devotion: She

She had nevertheleſs an Air ſo ſweet and modeſt, that in pleaſing, it imprinted a reſpect in us, which abated our Courage; her Voice even had ſomething ſo particular, one cannot expreſs it. I ſaw this Perſon; and, if I muſt diſguiſe nothing from you, will confeſs ſhe touch't me at firſt ſight. I remembred no longer the ill night I had paſſed; I almoſt forgot my ſelf, in ſuffering my ſelf to be wounded by this fair Priſoner: 'Tis true, I was not taken by Lines ſo ſtrong as could not be broken; or at leaſt ſtretched; yet not ſo ſlight neither, but that there remained in me a deſire to pleaſe a Perſon, that pleaſed me extreamly. She told me moſt obligingly, that ſhe wiſhed I had paſſed better hours than I had done in the Inn; and beſeeched me to ſpend that day with her, to repoſe my ſelf after the hardſhips I had endured the preceedent Night:

in it for ever; and if *I* could imagine that *I* should change, *I* would depart immediately. She answered only with a Smile, for fear of explaining her self too much before these persons. *I* began a very free Conversation with these three Ladies, and knew presently that they affected not, what was serious, but with people whose Censures they apprehended: *In* effect, they seemed pleased with my freedom, and seated themselves about me with much satisfaction. I never in my Life conversed with Persons that had so much Wit; every thing they said, was spoke with much vivacity, that it charmed the Ears; and had not any thing in it of that Monastical Air, which spoils the best things that one can say, that is infected with it. I believe it will not tire you, if I make a description of these Ladies, as well as the Abbess; especially

cially one of them, which was her Sister; and who has the greatest part in this History, and writ me the Letter which you have read. She was a Woman of an admirable stature, very fair complexion'd; the shape of her Face oval; her Eyes fair, and full of fire; and if she wanted any thing, 'twas a little colour; her Voice was very sweet, and she sung divinely; there was never any thing better formed, and more Vermilion than her Mouth; the whiteness of her Teeth answered well to this admirable Carnation; and the Breath which came from this fair Mouth, was so sweet, that it purified the most noisome Air: I must add to all these perfections, that she had as much Wit as 'twas possible one could have, and a Wit always at command, never speaking any thing that was not worthy of admiration. I will go no farther with her de-

Night: Her request was very kind, and as I excused it, I did it so coldly, that it might be easily seen that I had no mind to leave her yet; but as she had a discerning and quick Wit, she told me, that if she had not all the power over me, that was necessary to ingage me to stay, she did not doubt, but two or three of her Friends would be able to prevail with me, as soon as I had seen them, and that I had not resolution enough to resist their Prayers as I had done hers: She had no sooner said so, but she made the Ladies to be called, of whom she spoke; but I (who was willing to give her the entire honour) assured her that she would tempt me in vain on that side, for a thing which none but she could obtain of me, and that I did not believe that there was any thing in the World that had so much Power over the Sprit of a reason-

able

able Man, as she, or could better make themselves to be obeyed. This Complement was received of the *Abbess*, as I desired: She had modesty and virtue; yet flattery always found her weak side, and she could rarely defend her self from it: She knew, she had beauty, and though she served not her self of it, as a worldly person; neither did she neglect it so much, but that she had a certain joy in having it pleased. The three Nuns, her friends, arrived as she was going to answer, and changing suddenly her thoughts, Here is (said she, running towards them) sufficient to make you recal your words; these Ladies will perhaps teach you not to answer so easily for your self, I will leave you with them for an hour, about some little business, and expect to find you at my return of another mind. I swear to you, Madam, (answered I softly) I will remain

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deſcription, it will be tireſom, ſince no longer the Mode; and will only ſay, that there was not any thing common in this Lady. The two others were Perſons amiable enough, the one had a little more Spritelineſs than the other; who in exchange had more Sincerity, which rendered her a particular Friend of the *Abbeſs*'s Sifter.

I entertained theſe three Nuns for ſome time with indifferent things, wherein I endeavoured to diſcover as much Wit as I could: They did Wonders on their ſide to maintain the Converſation, particularly the *Abbeſs*'s Sifter: This Charming Perſon ſaid not any thing, but what was new; in ſo much, that I believed there was not any thing in the World that had ſo much Wit, or could make ſo good uſe of it. The *Abbeſs* came at laſt, and certainly *à propos*. if ſhe had the leaſt deſire to retain what ſhe had gained upon

upon me, for to ſpeak the truth, the merit of her Siſter appeared to me too great to give her leſs than a Heart. I was upon the point of changing my firſt opinion, as ſhe at her departure almoſt divined I ſhould; and I was juſt going to be perjur'd, if her preſence had not renew'd the Flame, which the firſt ſight of her had kindled in my Soul: her Siſter at leaſt hindred the progreſs of it; and I confeſs that had I not ſeen her, I ſhould have loved the *Abbeſs* very well. I never ſtirred from the Parlour all that day, being ſometimes with the one, and ſometimes with the other of theſe two perſons.

I believe (continued Monſieur *Le Chevalier*) that the company will not deſire I ſhould make a long ſtory of this Adventure, nor trouble them with every little Circumſtance. *Make not account* (replyed the Marchioneſs) *that we will allow*

allow you to omit the least particular, which may be of Consequence; and we expect You should be as faithful in your Relation, as in your Gallantry. We may permit him (answered the Dutchess) *to pass over many little things which he may tell us another season, that we may have time now for the rest. I would know* (pursued the same Lady, speaking to the Cavalier) *with what Air, and how you managed your self with these two Ladies? and being Witty, as they were, how could either of them suffer a Competitor? For methinks it is very difficult to deceive two Mistresses, much more two Sisters, that you must almost always see together.* I will tell you Madam (answered the Cavalier) what has happened to me in a year and halfs time, that I had the honour to be known to them. For the first time that I saw them, I stayed but a day and a half in the Visit, but found enough in this,

to

to make me desire not to be long absent; for all the time I stayed in that Province, I left them as late as I could, and came back again as early as possible. When I consulted the different Sentiments I had for the two Sisters, *I* found, (at least *I* thought so) that *I* was in love with the *Abbess*, and had a great esteem; and a most tender Friendship for the other. I was charmed with the Beauty and Sweetness of the first, and at the same time sensibly affected with the Perfections and Merit of the other, and had for her a strange kind of tenderness, even when I was with the *Abbess*.

I was not much put to it, to study my Actions at first; if there happened any thing remarkable in favour of the Eldest, the Younger was ready to attribute it to her Quality above her; and the Elder took all for Gallantry of

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Spirit, that I ſaid obligingly to the youngeſt: It is true, this ſimple Error laſted not long, for the more we love, the clearer ſighted we are in the matters to Rivals; ſo that both growing to have a little more eſteem for me than they had, they began to diſtruſt one another, and obſerved my Words, and Actions, with other Eyes than they had done hitherto: Sometimes, one told me, that I praiſed her Siſter, with that Exaggeration as was only proper to Love; the other reproacht me, that *I* always ſought the *Abbeſs*; and that ſhe obſerved, that *I* was not pleaſed, but when *I* was with her: All theſe little Complaints were but to make me declare my ſelf; and there was no Remedy, but *I* muſt do it, after having in vain avoided it.

The *Abbeſs*'s Siſter (whom we will call *Egidia*) was the laſt that preſt me, but ſucceeded beſt. She found

found the opportunity of a particular entertainment, at a season when she knew her Sister was ingaged by some affairs, that she could not dispence with: and looking upon me, with an Air the most tender in the World; Monsieur *Le Chevalier* (said she) *I* is no longer time to dissemble any thing with you; you have Wit, and know but too well, that you are not indifferent to me; it is now five or six months since we have been acquainted, yet *I* have never said any thing positively on this point; but this day *I* will do more for you, than you can expect from a Woman of my humour; 'tis to confess to you, that *I* have much tenderness and esteem for you; if you know me, you will not think this Confession little; and if you are obliged to me, it is for telling you that, which if *I* pleased might have been concealed all my Life.

*I*n the Transports, that this favour

your put me, *I* would have taken her Hand, and Kiſt it a thouſand times to teſtifie my joy to her; and how *I* conſidered ſo charming a Declaration; but ſhe hindered me, and pulling away her Hand, ſhe bid me hear her out. *If* you believe (purſued ſhe) that the favour *I* do you in this Declaration, merits any acknowledgment, give me that proof of it which *I* ſhall demand. You are too Gallant a Man, to be guilty of ſo much baſeneſs, as 'tis to deceive any one; much more, thoſe who have an eſteem, and Friendſhip for you:--*It* is ſome time ſince *I* diſcovered that the Lady *Abbeſs* loves you; ſhe her ſelf conceals it not from me.--Perhaps, becauſe ſhe knows, that *I* too am guilty of the ſame weakneſs: but ſhe is of opinion, that you love none but her; and, if *I* may believe your Eyes, your Heart has intelligence with her's. Tell me the Truth. —— Do you love her in good

good earneſt? Tell me, that without imbarquing my ſelf further in this affair, I this moment ſacrifice to her the inclination that I have to love you: I am yet reaſonable enough to render Juſtice to my Rival (if you will have me call her ſo) and to confeſs to you that She merits all your thoughts; and ſhe is too haughty and conſcious of her worth to be ſatisfied with leſs; and to tell you the truth, though I am her Inferior, I am ſo jealous in this particular, that I ſhould not without much pain, conſent to give place even to her. Conſider with your ſelf a little, and—— Madam (ſaid I to her, not being able to forbear interrupting her) I have no need to conſider. —— It is not three days, ſince I have but too clearly explained my ſelf to your Sister; if ſhe would have underſtood me. —— I avow, that her Goodneſs engaged me to many things, that I ſtole from you;

but *I* am like to prove very ungrateful, if no leſs than my Heart will pay the Obligations I have to her. —— 'Twas on *Thurſday* laſt, in the evening, when you were in the Garden, that ſhe took her time to tell me, That *I* had but one ſtep to make me to poſſeſs her Heart intirely, and that this was, that *I* ſhould hereafter forbear to be ſo exceeding civil to you. —— What is that you propoſe to me Madam? (Anſwered *I*, much ſurprized with what ſhe had ſaid) are you unjuſt enough to make me purchaſe your Heart, by ſuch a baſeneſs? — You muſt pardon me Madam, if you pleaſe —— but *I* cannot believe, that you would indeed, make me ſo Criminal. —— *I* underſtand you (replyed ſhe haſtily) and begin to know the fault, which my imprudence has made me to commit. —— You eſteem not my Heart enough, to engage you to ſuch a loſs, as that of my Siſters. —— But be-

before you go too far, *I* would advise you, to examine what Sentiments she has for you, and whether no other posses that esteem, you pretend to, alone. Madam (answered *I*) *I* know not what passes in your Sisters Heart; but since *I* have received all imaginable Civilities from her, *I* should have the greatest regret in the World, if *I* gave her the least cause to repent of it. You must however, resolve upon it (replyed she, with a tone, fierce, and disdainful) or pretend no more to any Kindness from me, which cannot be obtained at another price. *I* was going to answer her, and should have declared my self so plainly, as to give her occasion no longer to doubt of what past my Soul; when she retired her self, leaving me to consider what *I* was to do.

Thus you see Madam (continued *I* speaking to *Egidia*) what happened in this Conversation; *I* have

seen the *Abbess* several times since; but whether she could not find me alone, or that she feared to know too soon, what she would rather be ignorant of, she has not since spoken to me of any such thing. —— *I* must confess the Truth, *I* esteemed her fair, her Charms at first, surprized my tenderness; and what *I* yet feel for her is worthy a true Friend; *I* cannot refuse to rank her in that number, though even your self should command the contrary.

This Charming Virgin was so pleased with the sincerity, wherewith *I* spoke to her, and to find that there had no more passed between her Sister and *I*, that she willingly consented to our friendship: and being assured (as she was) of the intire possession of my Love, she could not reasonably do less.

We parted very well satisfied, and more amorous than before, at least it was so on my side; that soft ten-

tenderneſs, which *I* at firſt had for her, had already took the form of a ſtrong Paſſion, which increaſed dayly, whilſt that *I* had for the *Abbeſs* diminiſhed as faſt, almoſt before *I* perceived it. The Confeſſion of *Egidia*, of what ſhe felt for me, appeared to me ſo full of Charms, that it finiſhed the Conqueſt of my Soul; and there remained no more of it to her Siſter, then what was ſufficient to ſay, *I* did not hate her. I lookt upon her no more, but as a Friend, and a Perſon to whom *I* was very much obliged: She quickly obſerved it, either that ſhe perceived ſome alteration in my manner of acting, or that ſhe feared her Siſter more ſince we diſcourſed together. *I* obſerved, that ſhe took notice of all *I* did, and that ſhe had not that Confidence in me, ſhe was accuſtomed to have: She affected even not to believe any thing I ſaid to her. —— But

when with *Egidia* it was not the ſame, for what jealouſie ſoever ſhe felt, ſhe diſcovered none of it to her; but always ſpoke of me, as poſſeſſing a Heart, which ſhe did not fear to loſe. She forced her ſelf ſometimes to rally upon what ſhe ſaw *Egidia* do for me. *In* ſo much, that one day *Egidia* could not hide her Reſentments, nor ſuffer without impatience to ſee her Triumph over her, when ſhe was well ſatisfied, that ſhe had no reaſon for it; and that, ſhe intimated to her in terms malicious enough. *I* believe (anſwered the *Abbeſs*, in a fierce tone, and full of ſcorn) that my intereſt is ſo great in that Chevalier, that none will diſpute it with me, or if any durſt do it, that it would be in vain. *Egidia* failed not to anſwer her, and this little difference proceeded ſo far, that not being ble to be Judges, where themſelves were

were parties; they agreed to refer it to me, and ingage me to explain my ſelf before them, and that ſhe who ſhould be worſt treated, ſhould ſacrifice to the other all the inclination ſhe had for me.

I imagine, that this converſation had ſomething in it very ſingular, and that there would have been a very delightful Scene for any one that had heard it. This reſolution being taken, *Egidia*, who was a prudent Woman, when ſhe reflected on what ſhe had engaged her ſelf too, choſe rather to renounce the Glory, which this Victory might bring her, (for ſhe did not at all doubt of it) then expoſe me to thoſe ill Conſequences, which might follow this Declaration. Whereupon ſhe writ me this Letter.

I Am juſt now come from laying a Wager, in which winning or loſing, I am furiouſly interreſſed: the Ab-

bess *and my Self, are coming to ask a final Declaration from You: After Dinner, You must Discover to which side your Heart inclines: I am ready to flatter my self, that you Owe it to none but me.* —— *But alas! How can I guess, what will happen? I could not refuse the Water, and it would have been too much my Rivals Glory, if I had.* —— *Behold-I nevertheless, to what my Generosity can carry me! I consent (to prevent the ill Consequences that may happen) that rendring me Justice in your Heart, you pronounce it in Favour of my Eldest Sister.* Adieu. *Tell her you love her better than I; but for ever love me better than her.*

This Letter put me into some Confusion; but since I must take the part of One, I resolved without dispute what to do. —— And as I remember, this was the Answer I made to *Egidia*'s Letter.

I

I Beg your Pardon, Madam, *that I cannot obey You; I must Declare my true Sentiments when I am obliged to speak; and your Generosity must not be repayed with Baseness; 'tis true, it would be only so in appearance, yet since you are engaged, every thing shall go on your side. — But after such a proof of my Passion, will you be at least perswaded, that I love you as I ought? You must permit me to absent my self, for some time after I have undeceived your Sister; for there is no doubt but your Wager will produce ill Consequences; — it must be you that must sustain the burthen of them, since you would intangle your self in them.* Adieu.

I gave this Answer to the Boy that brought me her Letter; and bid my Man the same moment, get every thing in order, to go away presently, if there were occasion for it. I past the rest of the Morning

in the Garden, in musing upon the question that was prepared for me.

I forgot to tell you at the beginning, that this was one of those Convents, where the Nuns enjoy a honest liberty, and where Kindred, and particular Friends are permitted to enter, and see them in their Apartments.

I went to Dine with the *Abbess*, as the place where I ordinarily eat at, and was very melancholy at Table contrary to my Custom, for commonly *I* was so happy as to divert the Company well enough, which is often the best ragoust at Meals: the two interessed Ladies, were the first that observed it, and the *Abbess* said several obliging things to me, to put me in a better humor; but seeing I did not answer her; She at last ask'd me, what the matter was with me, that made me so serious? I told her it was a desperate pain in my head that

that had taken me since the Morning.

She had not neglected any thing that day, to make her self appear fair; and though the Dress of all Nuns, are almost alike, yet I avow to you, that I found something in hers so particular and agreeable, that with the sweet, and obliging manner wherewith she spake to me, the resolution *I* had taken to break with her, began to give me some pain, and without the presence of her Sister, she had been powerful enough, perhaps to have made me repent it. —— There was always two or three other Nuns of the *Abbess*'s Friends, that used to eat with us, whom she subtilly rid her self of, so soon as she had dined. ——— There was no need of Witnesses to what past between the *Abbess*, her Sister, and my Self. The *Abbess* touchs again upon the Sadness she saw in my Looks, and said that she had never seen me in so-

so ill a humour, and that *I* would oblige her, to let her know the cause of it. *I* answered her, as before, that it was a great pain in my head: But not satisfied with that, she told me, that she saw something in my Eyes, that made her judge that my Distemper was something more than I seemed willing to discover; and that *I* was unjust to conceal from my Friends (who were equally concerned with my self in any misfortune that could befal me,) any thing wherewith I was so much affected; and that *I* ought to give her the satisfaction at least of trusting her, though perhaps it was not in her power to cure me. —— *I* do not believe (said her Sister, to save me the trouble of answering her) that there is any other cause than what he has told you. One often sees (continued she) that people who have so much Wit as *Monsieur Le Chevalier*, are subject to these terrible Head-achs, and

and that they pass from one extremity to the other, that is, from great Mirth, to as great Melancholy. You believe then Sister (answered the *Abbess* coldly) that you know Monsieur's distemper, since you take upon you to answer for him; yet I will imagine that it is not as you say, but believe what he shall tell me, of it. And if he'l follow my advice (said *Egidia*) he shall tell you nothing. —— *I* do know it; and it is so much the harder, for people that know it not, to judge well of it. Believe me (said the *Abbess*, with a malicious Smile) if I ask to know it, 'tis not that *I* am ignorant of it; but to disabuse others, who, I see, are so fond of what they fancy they enjoy, that they fear to be undeceived. —— I conjure you Ladies, (interrupted *I*, all of a sudden) leave me as I am. —— Whatsoever my Disease is, and whencesoever it comes, *I* neither can —— nor will

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be cured of it if I cou'd; —— I would only ſuffer leſs. For my part (ſaid the *Abbeſs*) I who pretend not to divine, nor to penetrate ſo deep into Hearts, as my Siſter, would willingly be told of what nature this Diſtemper is; and perhaps (inſenſibility not being my Vice, for certain people in the World) *I* might give 'em eaſe, if it lay in me to ſweeten their Torments. There could not be any thing more Gallant, nor Favourably ſaid for me; and *I* believe, that *I* ſhould have anſwered her as ſhe deſired, had not *Egidia*, (looking ſuddenly upon me) made me, remember my promiſe, and put me in a ſtate of not knowing what to ſay. This amiable Lady perceived the Confuſion, I was in, and very opportunely put in, to the diſcourſe. *It* is true (ſaid ſhe) there are certain ills, that one muſt have recourſe to the perſon that cauſed them, for a remedy: but if *I* be'nt miſtaken, this

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is not *Monſieur*'s caſe; and you are deceived if you believe, that you are capable of curing his Diſtemper. —— Whatever it is (purſued ſhe) *I* am ſo ſenſible for all that concerns him, that *I* ſhall not be inquiſitous to hear any of his misfortunes. For you Madam (continued ſhe, ſpeaking to her Siſter) if you have this deſire, you may ſatisfie your ſelf, —— but you ſhall permit me, if you pleaſe, to retire.

—— And after theſe Words, ſhe went away, and left me alone with the *Abbeſs*, who believing ſhe had cauſe to triumph told me, with a joy, ſhe cou'd not conceal, that ſhe ſaw well, that my Heart was quitted to her, ſince the place was, and that it was ſhe muſt cure me of the ills whereof I complained; but ſhe ſaid, She muſt know of my ſelf, how she was eſtabliſhed in my Heart, and how much above her Siſter, —— that she had given me time enough to conſider of it, and

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that I must resolve one way, either not to hope any thing from her Tenderness, or not divide a good that she desired the intire possession of. ——— That she'd allow, *I* should have a tender esteem for her Sister, but for my Heart, she would fill it wholly her self; and that she had merit enough for it. —— She was silent here, to see a little what I would say, but I made no answer; and I believe that my silence told her enough, and that she took it for a wicked Omen. Some moments after, (seeing me ready to speak, as one that had studied what to say) she prevented me (apprehending (it is likely) that *I* would explain my self contrary to what she desired) My God! (said she) one has little reason to be satisfied with you to day; if one were not of a humour to pardon you every thing, and that one had not pity for you in this disorder. —— Go, and repose your self in your

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Chamber, —— the pain in your Head requires it, ——— and I shall take care that none disturbs you. ——— I retired with this permission, —— with so much Confusion that *I* scarce knew what *I* did; but *I* was not got to the door when she called me back. ——— Hark ye *Monsieur* (said she with an Air full of sweetness) *I* will see you at eight of the Clock this Night in the Arbour of the farther Alley, where *I'll* expect you with one of my Friends; and, if you love me you'll not fail to be there. What do *I* say (continued she hastily) if you love me? —— Though you should not love me, you are too much a Gentleman to fail at a Rendezvous that *I* give you, there not being any thing that *I* know, that can dispence with you, from it. ——— Adieu, ——— fail not to be there. Finishing these words, she smiled, and went into her Closet, to conceal from me a Blush, that came into her Face.

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Behold! (continued *Monſieur Le Chevalier*) how *I* came out of this Converſation that *I* had ſo much dreaded, which was much more lucky for me than *I* expected, having eſcaped a terrible Confuſion, that *I* ſhould have been in, to have declared my ſelf before theſe two Ladies, what choice my Heart had made: But I was not without fear of my Evening aſſignation; *I* ſaw well, ſhe would expect me, and that it was the laſt favour *I* was like to receive from her. —— But ſince there was no avoiding of it, *I* was reſolved not to diſguiſe any thing by unworthy Equivocatings; thinking *I* ſhould do well to ſerve my ſelf of this occaſion, that *I* ſhould find her alone to diſabuſe her, and not delay it to a longer time: The honours and favours ſhe did me augmented dayly, and ſo did my ingratitude, whilſt ſhe continued in her Error. *It* is true, it would have been unpardonable, if it had been

been voluntary, but there is no choice against powerful inclination. ——*I* determined upon this piece of justice, and was the rest of the Afternoon preparing my self for it.

They went to Supper about Six of the Clock, to have more time to Walk, and I appeared less melancholy at Table than at Noon: *Egidia*, who had not seen me since she left me with her Sister, (though she had sought me with extreme impatience, to ask me what pass'd in that enterview) judg'd from the alteration she saw in my humor, that I had betrayed her. I saw her much discompos'd, and that she scarce eat any thing, she was so full of thoughts: She had her Eyes always upon me or the Abbess, to surprize our looks, and see whether we were of Intelligence to deceive her. She had not patience to sit so long at Table as the rest, but left us upon a slight Pretext that she took, and retir'd into her Chamber; from whence

whence she sent me word by one of her Friends (that cunningly acquitted her self of the Commission) that she desired me to come speak with her there, so soon as I had Sup'd. I failed not to wait on her, and took so well my time when the Abbess was with two or three Ladies that came to visit her, that she perceived it not. I found this Lady sitting by a Table which she lean'd upon, with a very sad air, who told me as I entred, that I had no small obligation to her, for giving me occasion, by quitting the place, to come so well out of this affair at her cost; and that she doubted not but her Sister too had made an advantage of it, but that she loved me so well, that she could not repent of any thing that was for my satisfaction; and that when it was for my repose, she would sacrifice all things, even her heart. But changing presently her discourse, By what charm (said she) or rather by

by what ingagement, hath the Abbess brought you into good humor? For methinks you appear very gay this Evening. Alas! You were very melancholy this morning, have you some pledge of her heart that gives you thus much joy? Speak, Monsieur, conceal not any thing from me: You have betray'd me, and without doubt could not save your self out of my Rivals hands, but on these conditions. Betray'd you, Madam, (answered I) I beg you will tell me upon what ground you have such a Suspicion? Believe, if you please, that being far from thinking it, I——— No, no, Monsieur, (said she interrupting me) I see well you know me not: I am capable of loving better than you think, I cannot be satisfied with your heart by peace-meal, I would have it intire to my self, and I confess I have lived in a doubtful hope, for some time, that I should obtain it as I desired to have it. My Sister

has given me a thousand Inquietudes, and I was alarmed by the least of her looks; that a continual trouble hath not left me, to enjoy in quiet the pleasure there is to believe one is loved where one loves. But after so many alarms, I am a little perswaded——I am resolved your Love shall not continue divided, though I lose my share of it; And you, Monsieur, (continued she) must resolve in good earnest to love the Abbess, and endeavour to please her only. You'l not possibly have so much pain to do it as I wish, but however I expect she should confess to owe the obligation of it to me, and know that I was the first that motion'd it. I avow to you (pursued she, making a sign to me not to interrupt her) that I am not without pain for the loss of you, and that what I am now doing is harder to me than death; but I will conquer, and if I have any power over you, make you do as

as I ſay, and look upon me no more but as one of your Friends. As ſhe ended theſe words, a ſtream of Tears forced themſelves from her fair eyes, and ſhe was ſo ſtrangely overwhelmed with grief, that my Heart was rack'd to ſee it: I could not anſwer her ſuddenly, but embracing her tenderly, I admired the Generoſity and good Nature of this Lady: This tender paſſion which I diſcover'd through her Tears, pierced to the very bottom of my Soul; and I determin'd rather to ſacrifice my Life, than give her occaſion to doubt my Faith to her. I made her a thouſand proteſtations of my conſtancy, when I was able to ſpeak; and in the Eſtate wherein I was, not being capable of any weak expreſſion, I ſaid ſo many touching things to her, that ſhe was no longer willing to loſe me. After we had ſpent ſome time in tenderneſs, and Tranſports which are not to be deſcribed; I left her, excuſing my ſelf with

with pretence of ſome buſineſs (without telling her of my aſſignation with the Abbeſs, leſt ſhe ſhould prevent it) but that I would wait on her again before I went to Bed.

The hour was paſt that I promis'd to meet the Abbeſs, and the tears of the charming *Egidia* had ſo well diſpoſed me to do all things for her, that I dyed with deſire to give her this teſtimony of my love, after that ſhe had given me of her tenderneſs. I went then to the place, where I found the Abbeſs with one of her Friends, that retired ſo ſoon as ever ſhe ſaw me coming.

She told me that ſhe began to be weary of expecting me, and if I had ſtayed a moment longer, ſhe would ſcarce have pardoned me. I believ'd Madam (anſwered I, coldly enough) that I ſhould come time enough for what you had to ſay to me. She was much ſurpriſed with that anſwer, after the obliging Reception

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she had made me; but she endeavoured to dissemble it, and without taking notice of my unjust coldness, treated me with all the sweetness in the world: There was nothing that was ingaging but she made use of it, nor enchantment that she served not her self of. It suffices that a Woman is fair, and not indifferent to one, to make one find a thousand charms in her, when she designs to please. The resolution I had taken against this fair Abbess, became by little and little unprofitable, at least very weak: She drew from me a thousand tendernesses I know not how, and was no longer the Person *I* would abandon: She possess'd me so much in those few moments, that there was scarce room left in my Soul for the *Idea* of the amiable *Egidia*: To say the truth, the Abbess knew so well how to rekindle flames she had once made burn, that 'twas impossible to defend ones self from her: One would

say, that she had studied nothing all her life but to charm, and the most faithful of Lovers had been pardonable for every infidelity she had made him guilty of; for it was not in the power of man to do his duty when she seduced him. But not to detain you longer, (when there are so many things to say) I must confess to you that she made me know, one cannot be assured of any thing where a woman uses complaisance. If this Lady was not satisfied with me, she had, at least, no occasion to complain: One thing might surprise you, and give you an ill opinion of me, after the resolution I had taken; if I had not told you that the Abbess had charms none could resist; and that was, that I begg'd of her my self that she would not press me to declare my self in that she would know of me, but content her self with the power she had over me. And it was so great, that without

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lying I believe she might have made me guilty of the blackest perfidiousness in the world; but by good fortune she was willing not to pass further, because perhaps she feared not to succeed, and that 'twas not yet her time. She had had intelligence by some of those that were continually her Spies, of the Visit I made her Sister, and that they had seen her Eyes wet with Tears: She made some ralleries upon it, and told me that she well knew by my accost, the strange impression these tears had made in my Soul; but she would pardon me, hoping that in time I would accustom my self to see people weep. She said all this, and many other things, with an air so agreeable, that *I* knew not how to be displeased with it. *In* the mean while, it grew very late, which *I* gave her notice of, though she was not much pleased with it, and told me that *I* was the most impertinent

Gallant in the world; but it was time for us to retire, which we did with a tender adieu, that engaged us more than ever.

All the ſweetneſs ſhe had overwhelmed me with, hindred not a great repentance that ſucceeded it, and fill'd my heart with a horrible gall, ſo ſoon as ſhe was out of my ſight: But this was nothing, there muſt be ſomething more to puniſh me for my injuſtice to *Egidia*. The Abbeſs met her upon her return back, and maliciouſly ask'd her where *I* was. *I* know not (anſwered *Egidia*) but *I* ſuppoſe that not being well, he went to his Chamber betimes. You are deceived, Sifter, (anſwered the Abbeſs) and *I* will tell you that *I* know his diſtemper better than you do: *I* perſwaded him to take the Air in the Garden, and that would cure him; as in effect he finds himſelf better: You may know it from himſelf, whom *I* parted with here not a moment

ment since. *Egidia* remained the most surprised in the world, and knew not what to answer her; it was not possible to conceal from her part of her resentment, for which the Abbess triumph'd with an extreme joy, and left her in that estate. This poor Lady could not tell what to think, after what *I* had said to her, and the Oaths *I* had made her two hours before: She had too good an opinion of me, to believe lightly at another time what my Sister would say to my disadvantage, but in this she could neither doubt nor excuse me, the Treason was but too manifest, and every thing spoke against me. She was at first agitated with a thousand different passions, and so much grief seiz'd her at once, that she was not the same; one is always apt to believe what one fears. The first thing that she desired was to see me, and she sent her Footboy to fetch me to her: *I* came, and by

the impressment she had to speak with me, *I* had some suspicion of the truth: *I* imagined that this rendezvouz had not been so secret, but that she had made some shift to come to the knowledg of it; but did not think that the Abbess would so spitefully declare it.

I found this afflicted Lady alone in a retired room, and saluting her, *I* saw her so moved, and in such disorder, that *I* no longer doubted but she knew of my being in the Garden with her Sister. She spoke not to me at first, and, for my part, my guilt, and the grief *I* was in for being in a fault, had the same effect upon me, that anger and jealousie had upon her: so that we were both sometime without saying any thing: But at last, From whence come you? (said she, with low voice and without looking at me) *I* answered her that her Boy had met me as *I* was going to my Chamber. What! (replyed she, with a more elevated

voice,

voice, and regarding me with eyes fuller of grief than anger) have you to do a new Treason? Did you make me so many promises this Evening, but to deceive me with more ease? What have *I* done to you? After these words grief deprived her of speech, and she was just swooning away.

I cannot represent to you the estate I was in, to see a Person dying that was so dear to me. Ah! How cruel were the moments, and how happy I should have been to have dyed also, if Heaven would have heard me, and not laugh at the pains which Love makes us suffer? I look'd upon her as a man without sense or motion, and had not the power to assist her nor call for help. This fainting had not so far taken away her senses, but that she observed upon my face a concern that spoke for me, and nothing (as she has since told me) made her return sooner from this cruel indisposition,

than the intereſt ſhe ſaw I had in it. The ſilence and confuſion I was in made my peace, and all her grief was not ſtrong enough to reſiſt the ſatisfaction ſhe received from mine.

By good fortune two Nuns paſs'd by juſt then, who ſeeing her in that eſtate, immediately run to us, and thought that ſhe was fallen into ſome Fits that Women are ſubject to: This made a noiſe in the Convent, and the Abbeſs was with the firſt informed of it, but was not over-haſty to ſuccour her. For my part, I retired as ſoon as I ſaw there were people enow about her: Although the Abbeſs ſent three or four times to ſpeak with me, I pray'd her to excuſe me, and ſaid, that next day I would wait her pleaſure. *Egidia* (that they had carried to her Chamber) was come to her ſelf again, and ſeeing me not by her Bed ſide, at a time that ſhe believed, if I had loved her, I could not have left her; ask'd a Maid that

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ſerved her ſoftly, if ſhe knew where I was? This Maid that had ſeen me go into my Chamber the moment I quitted her Miſtreſs, with tears flowing from my eyes, made a faithful relation of it to her, wherewith ſhe was ſo extremely touch'd, that ſhe prayed her Sifter, who ſate by her, to ſend for me. The Abbeſs put her off a good while, and told her that ſhe had already done it twice to no purpoſe; and that ſhe would no more ask to be refuſed. *Egidia*, who paſſionately deſired to ſee me, and could not endure I ſhould paſs the Night in the ſadneſs wherein I was; reſolved to try if ſhe could prevail. She thought ſhe ſhould not hazard much, nor loſe much credit, if ſhe could not obtain of me more than her Sifter. She ſent to me then the ſame Maid that ſhe confided in ſo much, to tell me, that if I deſired ſhe ſhould be better, I ſhould come to ſee her before I went to Bed, and that ſhe ex-

pected it, if I had yet a little Love for her. I cannot tell you how ready I was to obey her; those who love may easier imagine it: I came then to her Chamber, where was none but the Abbess with her; who expected with impatience to see how this Scene would pass: Both of them perceived presently a change of countenance in me. I know not well what the Eldest thought, but I am sure I caused pity in the younger. This poor Lady look'd upon me with an air so tender and touching, that I could not forbear (notwithstanding the presence of her Sister) casting my self on my knees before her, and taking one of her hands, kiss'd it a thousand times, and wet it with my tears which I had not power to restrain. There is no doubt but the Abbess saw with an ill will these sensibilities: These were cruel strokes, which she could not forbear discovering her resentments

of,

of whatsoever endeavours she used to prevent it. Certainly Sister, (said she with a tone that surprised us) Monsieur *Le Chevalier* hath done you some great injury, by the manner wherewith he seems to beg pardon of you: You cannot refuse it to his tears; yet (continued she, rising to go away) if you will be advised by me, you shall not do any thing, till he has promised you never to relapse into the same fault again; and *I'll* answer for him, that he cannot promise it, or if he do, that he will be perjur'd. Make this gallant peace, *I* will retire and leave you alone, for *I* believe you desire no Witnesses. *I* turned my head to answer her, but she was got out of the Room, and saved me the displeasure *I* should have had afterwards, to have said any thing in a passion unbecoming the respect *I* owe her. *I* remained then alone with *Egidia*, and in greater confusion than when the Abbess was there:

there: Although *I* had many things to say, *I* knew not where to begin, and silence was the only Language of which *I* served my self: But she, who suffered to see me afflicted, (though it was for the Love of her) after having endeavoured to reassure me by her looks; Well, Monsieur, (said she in a soft tone, and squeezing my hand) don't you repent of having betrayed the best of your Friends? Think well what you have sometimes said to me: How had you then the courage to deceive me? Speak! —She made me yet a thousand other reproaches, to which she added a hundred things that *I* cannot relate as they were said. In a word (to pass lightly over a Subject which touches me yet in describing it) *I* justified my self to her as well as *I* cou'd; confessed our rendezvouz, what had obliged me to it, and the reason *I* had to conceal it from her; so that she was well satisfied with me. *I* saw her

ſer as ſweet as ever, and ſhe diſcovered more tenderneſs and confidence in me than ever, that it made amends for all the pain we had endured that night: We never loved ſo well, and this little diſcontent ſerved but to increaſe the flames which were kindled in us. The hour was already paſs'd that in civility *I* ſhould have retired at: *I* had no mind the Abbeſs ſhould ſend me word ſo, as ſhe might have done, but the misfortune was, (the doors of the Convent being ſhut, except thoſe of her Apartment) *I* muſt of neceſſity paſs that way to my Lodging. 'Tis true, that in the eſtate wherein *I* was, fortified with the powerful charms of her Siſter, *I* made little reflection upon what *I* ought to fear: *I* examined not the danger there was, and felt *Egidia* ſo deep in my heart, that *I* was even glad (at leaſt *I* fancied ſo) of this occaſion to defie all the inchantments of the Abbeſs. *I* took then,

then, ſince there was no avoiding it, that way to my Chamber, paſſing through the midſt of hers; where ſhe was alone and undreſs'd. She offered at firſt to ſtay me a moment with her, but I excuſed my ſelf upon pretence it was late, and ſhould incommode her: She anſwered me, that ſhe knew well enough I was perſwaded I could never be troubleſom to her, whatſoever hour it was. But to avoid the ceremony I might yet uſe, ſhe commanded me to take a Seat by her, for ſhe had ſomething to ſay to me, and wou'd be obey'd. If you pleaſe (anſwered I) I will wait till to morrow. No (replyed ſhe briskly) once more I will ſay it now to puniſh you for your want of complaiſance—'tis leſs to oblige than torment you. *I* turned this conſtraint into rallery, and called it a ſweet violence, being it was not in my power to diſobey her, for ſhe had cauſed the doors to be ſhut by which *I* was to

paſs.

pass. *I* told her then (not to appear rude, nor having a desire to break unhandsomly with her) that the endeavours she used to stay me were extremely charming; that there was never a man in the world, that would not esteem it great favour, especially at such an hour. I am of opinion (said she) that it might pass for such in most mens thoughts but in yours, and who expresses any goodness to you, must expect in return but indifference and slights. *I* believe it is not requisite to make you a longer relation of what the Abbess said to me, and what *I* answered her: *It* suffices that you know in general, that *I* needed only to see her, to be shaken in my strongest resolutions: Once more *I* knew not what weakness *I* had when near her, but 'tis certain she made me quite different from what *I* was, and *I* remembred no more the design *I* had to disingage my self from her. She was

this

this night in a charming undreſs, that in its negligence had a great deal of Art. *I* am afraid *I* ſhall paſs with you that don't know this charming Abbeſs, for the greateſt Traitor, and baſeſt of Men: *I* was near two hours with this fair Enchantreſs, and left her as a Man that had ſcarce the power to do ſo. What joy, what triumph was this for her? *I* was no more the indifferent that deſpiſed her favours, but a re-conquer'd Lover, who left her not without regret; but certain it is, that *I* paſs'd the reſt of the Night very ſadly, and made my ſelf all the reproaches imaginable. The charms of this Abbeſs had ſomething in them which had not power longer than *I* ſaw them; for a moment after *I* had loſt ſight of her *I* came to my ſelf, ſaw my crime, and could not enough repent of it.

In the firſt viſit *I* made *Egidia*, *I* gave her a faithful account of all that paſs'd between the Abbeſs and

I:

I: *I* told her the perfidiousness *I* had been guilty of, at which she but laught, seeing with how much freedom *I* confess'd it; yet she had a desire to be revenged of her Sister, which she was after this manner.

I have already told you how the Apartments of these two Ladies were not far from each other, which made them always together, tho' they loved not much. *Egidia* knew how desirous her Sister was to have my Picture which *I* had given her, but she always kept it lock'd up for fear of her; the Abbess waiting but an occasion to seize of it: *Egidia* gave her fair hopes: for one day leaving her Cabinet open (having taken the Picture with her) went to walk in the Garden, and gave the Abbess time enough to satisfie her self if she could have found what she sought, and had not seen there what for her repose she desired not to see. The poor Abbess perceived not the intended malice of her

her Siſter: She ſearch'd every where unprofitably for the Picture, but believed not wholly to have loſt her labour, having found ſeveral of my Letters to *Egidia*. She ſhut her ſelf up in the Cloſet to read them: There was two or three wherein *I* ſpoke of her; of which here is one, whereby you may judge of the reſt.

I Am deſperate, Madam, when I hear you ſay that I love you not; and that, Madam, the Abbeſs hath ſeized on my heart: Do juſtice to your merit, and if you know your ſelf well, you will believe you are not to be put in the ballance together. If I could have divided my heart (as you ſay) I would take away the half of it from you this moment, to puniſh your incredulity. Fear not any thing, poſſeſs this poor heart in quiet, and leave appearances to your Siſter, which I cannot refuſe her without paſſing for the moſt ingrateful of men, as in effect I am. Adieu.

You

You see well this Letter was none of the most obliging for the Abbess, and it is not necessary, I imagine, to tell you how much she was enraged at it: Spite, Jealousie, and Shame, to see her self so used by a man that she had had so much goodness for, inspired her at first with the most cruel designs that an injured woman is capable of. She came furiously out of the Closet, after having tore all the Letters in a thousand pieces, as she would have done my heart had it been in her power; and but for the intreaties of a Lady that was her friend, I know not whither her resentments would have hurried her. This Lady (who was her confident in all things, and had much discretion) endeavoured by degrees to make her come to her self: She told her that she ought to be careful of her conduct, and that to make a bustle in such an affair would not be to her

her advantage; that she ought to consider the place she was in, and that this would prove no good example for her Nuns. But what arguments could make her disgest so cruel an affront! All that this good Lady could obtain of her, was, that she should not see me all that day to have more time to consider what she had to do.

Egidia returned at last from her walk, and going into her Closet, found all in disorder there, and the Letters in the condition that I told you: The pleasure of revenge (which is the greatest of life to women) made her taste, in this occasion, contentments, that one must be a Woman and a Lover to comprehend. She could not be long without communicating to me an adventure that she rejoyced so much in; but first she would prepare me to receive it, that I might not be troubled at it: And having sent for me into her Chamber, she ask'd me what

what I would say if she had made a quarrel between me and her Sister? I answered her, that provided she was not interested therein, I should not be concerned at it. She related to me afterwards the effects of the Abbess's jealousie, and shewed me in what a condition my Letters were. I discovered no trouble at first, but at the bottom of my heart I approved not the action; and when I reflected on all that I had writ to her, I could have wished that she had made use of some other means, and that she had taken other arms for her revenge. I doubted not but the Abbess was in a strange fury, and that this affair would draw some ill consequences in which *Egidia* would be the first sufferer: I could not forbear expressing some of my fears to her, but assuring her withal, that I would never censure any thing that she did; but that knowing so well as I did her Sisters temper, I feared all things

things from her paſſion, and that it would be through her that ſhe would revenge her ſelf of me. I ſaid all this in a very tender manner, but however *Egidia* took it not ſo, who looking upon me with ſpiteful ſmile, I ſee (ſaid ſhe) I have alarm'd you, and that I have not done you good ſervice. Go, Monſieur, (continued ſhe, riſing at the ſame time to go away) go, and caſt your ſelf at her feet; ſwear to her that you adore her, and ask her pardon for all you have writ to me. I! Madam (anſwered I in ſtopping her) to accuſe me of ſo much baſeneſs is to diſavow my heart. Ah! ſuffer if you pleaſe, that I tell you, you know me but ill, and that I am ready to confeſs to her all the paſſion I have for you in my heart: You ſhall ſee it if you will, and exact from me even greater proofs of my Love; you may do it, and I give you all this day to have yet this pleaſure, but to morrow I muſt leave

you,

you, and you shall see how little I am in pain for your Sisters favour. This sudden resolution surprized *Egidia* a little, and she was troubled that she had driven matters so far: She embraced me tenderly, and did all she could to make me change my design; but with much difficulty I left her without promising her any thing. *I* spent the remainder of that day thinking what to resolve upon, and after all *I* concluded it best to depart; but that which troubled me was, how *I* should take my leave with the Abbess, which was a duty *I* could not dispence with. *I* took the time that *I* knew most company would be with her, to avoid a thousand bitter reproaches, that *I* was confident she durst not make me before Witnesses.

I went then at night to her Apartment, and ask'd a Nun *I* met (who was sent without doubt for that purpose) if *I* could not have the honour to see the Abbess? She said

said, No, for she was not very well; but not taking that for an excuse, she whisper'd me in the ear, that this Order was expressly for me, and she counsell'd me as a friend to retire. *I* confess that this proceeding surprized me not so much as it would have done, if *I* had not been prepared for an ill reception; 'tis true, however, that *I* resented this refusal with some despight, and should not have been consol'd for it, but by the means it gave me of acquitting my self another way, of the respect *I* owed her: 'Twas, in fine, by writing that *I* resolved to bid her adieu, as you shall see by this Letter.

I Know not, Madam, if it is in earnest that you are sick, that I could not see you; or whether you are weary of seeing me here. The one or the other give me equal pain, and for fear of knowing too much, I inform not my self of that whereof I am glad to be ignorant;

ignorant; and leſt I be more unhappy than I am, I deſign not to preſs you further to declare it to me, but to depart hence to morrow. If you were viſible I ſhould be glad to take leave of you in form: Suffer, if you pleaſe, that I make uſe of the only means that is left for me to bid you Adieu. I kiſs your Hands moſt humbly.

This Letter, as you ſee, was not very gallant, nor well made; and *I* muſt ſee her (to ſpeak truth) when *I* ſaid any thing of tenderneſs. She received the Letter, but made me no anſwer.

Egidia, who ſaw I would certainly leave her, and that ſhe muſt be expos'd to all the tempeſt, pray'd me that before I went, *I* would, at leaſt, make ſome ſort of peace with the Abbeſs, and not give the Nuns occaſion of diſcourſe by ſuch an abrupt departure. She added moreover, that her Siſter would infallibly believe that 'twas ſhe had made

me haſten my going away, and that ſhe'd be glad of this pretence to turn all her reſentments upon her: For my part, who feared not death more than the thoughts of this interview, which repreſented to me all the reproaches ſhe'd make me, and to which I could make no reply; I could not tell how to reſolve to ſee her. *Egidia*, who ſaw my fear and unwillingneſs, graciouſly conſented at laſt that I ſhould depart, without taking my leave of her any other way than as I had done; but to abſent my ſelf but for ſome days, expecting till the Spirit of the Abbeſs was a little ſweetned, and that I ſhould return if it were neceſſary, at the leaſt notice ſhe ſhould ſend me. I put all things in readineſs to go away next morning, to ſee one of my friends in the Neighbourhood; and as I was juſt going a Horſeback, a Footboy brought me a Note, wherein I read theſe words.

Dar'ſt

Dar'ſt thou depart without ſeeing me, thou moſt baſe and ingrateful'ſt of all men! But go, for 'twould be too great a favour to ſuffer thy Sight after thy Treaſons: Yet take thy choice, that I may ſee how far thy black Ingratitude will carry thee; and if thou canſt even forget that thou oweſt me at leaſt this civility in leaving my Houſe.

Never was man ſo aſtoniſhed as I was, after the reading of this Letter: I ſaw well that whatever it coſt me I muſt ſee her, and only ask'd the Boy where his Lady was, who telling me ſhe was alone in her Chamber, I went thither; but 'twas as a Criminal that preſented himſelf before his Judge.

I found the Abbeſs ſo changed, and ſo ſad, that ſhe would have touch'd the heart of a Barbarian. I know not what I did then, but 'tis certain I was not my ſelf, and that

the confuſion her ſight put me into, cannot be expreſt. She look'd upon me ſome moments without ſpeaking to me, afterwards ſaid ſhe to me, What come you here for? I thought you had been gone already. *I* did not believe, Madam, (anſwered I) that I ought to do ſo, when I might have the honour to ſee you before I went. I come to take my leave of you, and at the ſame time, to beg the favour to know wherein I have offended you. Wherein you have offended me! (ſaid ſhe ſighing) Ah! Traytor, you know it but too well: Well, Madam, (ſaid I to her) ſince you'l have me know it, tell me what I muſt ſuffer for my crime: If Death, be aſſured my Life depends upon what you pleaſe to ordain. Death! (replyed ſhe again) alas! you have but too well deſerved it, and that is my greateſt trouble. What do you expect then (replyed I in a paſſion) if there wants but a Sword to

give it me, take mine. In saying so, I presented it ready drawn to her, and opened my Breast for her to pierce it; but she only turned her head away, and said with a louder voice, Cruel! thou know'st ill my heart, if thou believest I can be revenged of thee that way: I wish only that my Life were dear enough to thee, that I might punish thee by taking away that; but I should not have the satisfaction to see thee breathe one sigh at my death. As she spoke these words, abundance of Tears covered her Face, and Sobs took away from her the use of her Speech, insomuch that my heart was torn with pity. I knew not what to say, fearing she'd take any thing I said to her for new infidelities; but as it is no hard matter to pacifie a Person that loves, and that would be loved, I behaved my self so well, that by degrees I vanquished her anger, and left her not till I saw her in a humor to

pardon me all things. That which obliged her to it the ſooner, was that ſeeing me reſolved to be gone, ſhe had a deſire to ſtay me, and ſhe thought ſhe could not prevail by treating me rudely. *I* was not yet ſo indifferent to her, that ſhe could be willing to part with me altogether; and perhaps ſhe did not deſpair (ſo ordinary is it for them in love to flatter themſelves) to carry me at laſt from her Sifter: She did not know that *I* deſigned to abſent my ſelf but three or four days, but believed that *I* intended not to return any more; and *I* made her to have an obligation to me for it. *I* prayed her, at leaſt, that ſhe would ſuffer me to to make a little Journy thereabouts, to which ſhe conſented the more willingly, that none might take notice, and cenſure my changing of my reſolution, and how ſoon ſhe was come to her ſelf. She was glad to obſerve ſome circumſtances, that her weakneſs might not

not appear, and that it might be believed that she recovered by time. Above all, she exacted of me that I should not speak to her Sister of our reconcilement, and that I should not so much as see her at parting; if I would not make her repent of her great indulgence to me. I promised her I would not, and though *Egidia* sent to desire me to come to speak with her; I prayed her, by one of her friends, to dispence with me, for reasons *I* would write to her, which *I* was sure would satisfie her. To say truth, I owed thus much, at least, to a Person that *I* had so great obligations to, and that had so much reason to complain of me.

I went away then to one of my Friends houses, from whence *I* writ several Letters to these Ladies, and received as many from them. *In* the last *I* received from the Abbess, she desired me to come the day after the receipt of it, to the

ſame place where *I* laſt ſaw her; and very ſecretly, eſpecially not to let her Siſter know any thing of it: That ſhe would be there at Nine a Clock at Night, and expect me till Eleven. *I* ſaw well enough, by this Letter, that the Abbeſs was calm'd: *I* believed I could not handſomly balk the aſſignation; but by apology of Love, *I* thought fit to advertize her Siſter of it, that ſhe might not complain of me, if ſhe came to know it, as ſhe did the other aſſignation. *I* anſwered the Abbeſs, that I would not fail to wait on her at Nine a Clock, and this Letter *I* ſent to her Siſter.

IF you were in my place, you would without doubt do what I am going to do this day; but I aſſure you, 'tis with all the regret in the world. I received a Letter yeſterday from your Siſter, wherein ſhe deſires me to meet her at Nine a Clock in the Evening in the Garden, and forbids me above all things

things to let you know any thing of it. I believe it will not displease you that I obey her, and that you would counsel me to it your self if you were here: Fear not any thing, my Fidelity is proof against all her charms; for I am never more yours, than when I am with her. Adieu.

I gave to the Abbess's Boy my answer to her, and sent this by a Servant of mine to *Egidia*, but a little before *I* went away my self, that it might be dark when he came to the Abby, to deliver it more securely. He was there at the hour *I* desired, and got into the Parlour without any bodies taking notice of him. When he was there, he heard some body go, but the Night hindered him from knowing who it was: He ask'd at a venture, if they would do him the favour to call Madam *N*——You must know this was the Abbess, who was walking in the Parlour, and expecting with ex-

treme impatience, the hour of our meeting. She knew at first my Mans voice, and said, if he would have any thing with that Lady, 'twas she. These two Ladies voices were so like, that sometimes their most familiar friends were deceiv'd. My Man, that knew not the danger of a mistake, and believed that it was she he ask'd for, gave the Letter without delay into her hands, and believed he had acquitted himself very well of the Commission *I* had given him. The Abbess, after she had taken the Letter, dispatcht my Man, and told him it required no Answer. You may easily guess at her impatience, to see what *I* had writ to her Sister; but it would be difficult to represent her trouble after she had satisfied her curiosity. She was not naturally very wicked, and if jealousie had not been in it, she would, perhaps, have contented her self with reproaches: But this passion does not usually rest in such

ſuch weak revenge; it always carries its deſigns to extremity, a love offended is the moſt terrible of all furies. The Abbeſs went immediately into her Siſters Chamber, where ſhe found her alone: Confeſs after all, my Siſter, (ſaid the Abbeſs to her, after having ſpoke indifferently enough of me before) that we are both deceived in the advantagious thoughts we have for this Gentleman, who has paid with Treaſons all that goodneſs we have ſhow'd him. For my part (added ſhe) *I* am now ſufficiently diſabus'd, and it is true that I am partly obliged to you for it, and that without ſeeing the Letters in your Cabinet, I ſhould have been yet in a ſtrange error. If you pleaſe, I'll, in exchange, do you the ſame ſervice: But, my poor Siſter, you are ſo preposſeſt to his advantage, that whatever one ſhall ſay to you, you will not believe that any thing is ſo true, as what he has told you. What

do,

do you mean (anſwered *Egidia* coldly) I ſee not any thing that Monſieur does, that I can blame him for, nor but what diſcovers he has much reſpect for me; and till I have cauſe for the contrary, I am reaſonable enough not to change the Sentiments I have for him. But if one makes you ſee (ſaid the Abbeſs) that you deceive your ſelf in thoſe Sentiments, that he betrays you, and is the baſeſt of all men, What would you then ſay? Perhaps (replyed *Egidia*) I ſhould not be ſo acknowledging, as ſuch a Service might merit: For, not to lye, though commonly one takes no pleaſure in being deceived, yet in this I muſt confeſs my weakneſs, that I love to be in an error; an evil is not ſo till one knows it. How you are to be pitied, (replyed the Abbeſs again) and yet you deſerve not to be diſabus'd; but you are my Siſter, and againſt your will I muſt pity you. Know then, that this

honeſt Man, this faithful Friend, and what elſe you are pleaſed to call him, begg'd of me by a Note yeſterday, to have an interview with him in the Garden this Evening; and conjured me, as much as he cou'd, that it might be ſecret, and eſpecially that you knew nothing of it. If you will not believe me, (continued ſhe, ſeeing ſhe was troubled, and had changed colour twice or thrice) you may but come along with me to believe your own eyes. Whatever conſtancy of Spirit this amiable Lady had, ſhe was ſhaken by this diſcourſe: The infidelity was manifeſt, and ſhe could not doubt of it, when her Rival aſſured her ſo poſitively of the thing, and offered to bring her to the rendezvouz, to be witneſs of it her ſelf. She agreed to the propoſal, gave her Arms to poniard her ſelf, and would not defer a moment to ſee her death, ſince the hour of it was come.

THE

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THE

THE CONTINUATION Of this HISTORY:

Told by a Lady of Company.

I Cannot tell whether Monsieur *Le Chevalier*'s account be all true, because he was acquainted with these Ladies a year before I came to the Convent; but this I can say, that it bears good report with what I have heard: But I will warrant what I am going to tell you, for a very faithful relation of all that passed in my time.

I was

I was very well received in this Abby, which ſome croſs affairs obliged me to make uſe of for a retreat: 'Twas near a Month when I came there, ſince Monſieur *Le Chevalier* had been abſent. I heard him ſpoke of ſometimes as a very gallant man, for whom the Abbeſs had a great eſteem, and from whom ſhe received Letters often: I perceived quickly that this eſteem had ſomething in it very tender, and that there was ſomething in this friendſhip, above what we ordinarily ſee in that paſſion. The Abbeſs, who had much goodneſs and confidence in me, ſaid to me a thouſand advantagious things of him: She put him above all men, and ſhe could have wiſh'd that I had not only commended him to her, but that I judg'd it reaſonable in her. As long as things ſeemed not to me to go far, I appeared very complaiſant; but when I came to know that theſe importments were more of

Love

Love than Friendſhip, that it excited jealouſie between the two Siſters, that it cauſed Tears, Sighs, and Langueors, I could not forbear ſpeaking my thoughts of it freely to the Abbeſs, and to repreſent to her, that an ingagement of this nature would do her an injury one day, and that an amorous affair ought not to enter into a Religious Houſe. She, in appearance, took pleaſure in my freedom, but indeed it begot in her coldneſs to me: She would have been glad of a little more complaiſance in my friendſhip, and her pain being without remedy, could have wiſh'd I would have help'd her to ſupport it. This was the cauſe that I had leſs converſe with her, and ſeldom ſaw her but as my duty, that I might not break altogether with a Perſon that commanded where I was, and to whom I had many obligations. Her Siſter manag'd her ſelf a little better, and though ſhe had not leſs eſteem and tenderneſs

tenderneſs for Monſieur, ſhe acted nevertheleſs, before the world as if ſhe were indifferent; for ſhe had much more wit than her Siſter, though not ſo much beauty.

I will begin my recital, if the company pleaſe, where Monſieur left yeſterday; all that he has yet ſaid, being nothing in compariſon of what I have to tell you.

Into what anger and tranſports fell the fair Abbeſs, when ſhe ſaw the Treaſon of her Lover: The leaſt thing her paſſion ſuggeſted to her, was to be revenged of the Traytor, and to make him be kill'd.

A Maid that ſhe moſt confided in, and who was too young to take the liberty of adviſing her, came every night before ſhe went to Bed, to recount to me part of theſe follies, with which, in truth, I could but divert my ſelf.

The Abbeſs took then (as Monſieur has told you) her Siſter with her to this aſſignation, where he failed

failed not to be at the hour appointed: His ſurpriſe was great, as you will imagine, to ſee the two Siſters together, after what the Abbeſs had writ to him, that none ſhould know of this enterview, eſpecially her Siſter: He remembred moreover, what he had writ to her, and the requeſt he made her in his Letter, that ſhe ſhould not be troubled at this aſſignation. He knew not, in fine, what to believe, and of a thouſand thoughts which paſſed through his Mind, none came near the right, ſo little likelihood there was that ſuch a thing ſhould happen. In the midſt of thoſe cruel pains that Spite and Jealouſie made the Abbeſs ſuffer, ſhe taſted an extreme joy to ſee the trouble that Monſieur was in; but her Siſter had nothing to allay her grief, and uſed the greateſt violence to her ſelf imaginable, to forbear reproaching him. She had not patience to ſtay long there, but went from them,

after

after ſhe had view'd him from head to foot, with an air of Scorn and Indignation, without ſaying a word to him. This poor Lover, who began to recover of his firſt ſurprize, when he ſaw how ſhe look'd upon, and avoided him, fell into a ſecond much more cruel. I know not (ſaid he, ſpeaking to the Abbeſs) what I have done to your Siſter, that my preſence drives her hence. It is (anſwered the Abbeſs coldly) becauſe your return here was not expected ſo ſoon, where you have but little buſineſs. Ah! if it be as you ſay, Madam, (replyed Monſieur) I ſwear to you *I* will not continue here long, for I hate above all things to be troubleſom to people: But yet, Madam (added he, ſuddenly) you muſt not take it ill, if I go and know of your Siſter, if this be the reaſon that ſhe treats me thus; after that I ſhall ſtay no longer with you, than is neceſſary to bid you adieu. In ſaying this, he run after the fair afflict-

ed,

ed, whom he overtook juſt as ſhe was going into the Convent. What's the matter with you, Madam, (ſaid he to her, almoſt out of breath) that you fly from me? And why did I find you in a place where I ought not to ſee you? Say rather, thou moſt perfidious, (anſwered ſhe) that I ought not to ſee thee there: But at laſt thy Treaſons are diſcovered, and thou ſhalt not deceive me any longer, for *I* will not ſee thee again all my life. After theſe words, ſhe went into the Convent, ſhut the door upon her, and left Monſieur in the moſt deplorable condition that a man could be reduced to: He can tell you that he was a hundred times going to kill himſelf, and that he would have made a thouſand reproaches to this ungrateful, if ſhe could have heard them. His Conſcience accus'd him not of any infidelity, he believed he had not done any thing contrary to his duty in this Aſſignation, ſince he had

had given her notice of it, and he knew well that in relation to this fair one, he deserved not the name of perfidious. So severe a treatment made him resolve to depart without expecting any longer, hoping time would convince his Mistress of the wrong she had done him; or that despight and absence would cure him of his Love. The Abbess, who had followed him, and was not desirous the mistake should be clear'd, arriv'd as he was in this resolution: He accosted her of a fashion as sufficiently testified his despair; and scarce looking on her, What you told me, Madam, (said he to her) was more than ever *I* could have thought, and *I* am treated here with so strange an air, that *I* am astonish'd: There's no other way to take, than not to stay a moment longer in a place where my presence is so odious. Behold! (answered the Abbess) how Traytors ought to be recompenc'd for their Treachery? *I* have

I have not time, Madam, (anſwered Monſieur) to ask you what reaſon you have to give me that name. *I* muſt depart this inſtant to deliver you from a Man, that is more than troubleſom to you: 'Tis enough, if you'l be pleaſed to remember, that 'twas you that cauſed my coming here at this time: *I* am come, as *I* promiſed you, and you, perhaps, brought your Siſter, that you ſo ſtrictly charged me ſhould know nothing of it. Yes, Traytor, (anſwered ſhe, tranſported by her paſſion) and it was in that, that thy baſe heart has failed thee. Speak! Tell me, baſe! ——*If* thou haſt not writ to her, what thou wert deſired to conceal. Monſieur was ſo ſtrangely ſurprized here, that he remained immovable; and believ'd effectually that *Egidia* (to continue the Name which he gave her in his relation) had made her privy to the Letter he had writ her. So ſoon as he was recover'd a little from the diſorder

diſorder he was in, *I* know not well, Madam, (ſaid he to her) what you mean; but if all theſe injurious reproaches are but to drive me from hence, *I* aſſure you that you give your ſelf this trouble without need, and leſs would ſerve to make me reſolve never to ſee you more. *I* am juſt going from this Country (continued he, going away) and bid you, Madam, an eternal adieu. The Abbeſs ſtayed him, and told him a little more calmly, that whatſoever reaſon there was to treat him yet worſe, it was not fit he ſhould go away at ſuch a time of Night. Whether there be reaſon or no, (replyed Monſieur briskly) *I* am ſo little accuſtomed to be thus receiv'd whereever *I* go, that *I* ſhall ſupport very impatiently thoſe moments that *I* am confin'd here. I beg of you, Madam, (purſued he, endeavouring to diſengage himſelf from her) not to ſtrive, out of a formal piece

of

of ceremony, for that which would be troubleſom both to your ſelf and me. But *I* will not have you go to night (ſaid the Abbeſs to him) and if it be true, that *I* have yet power enough left to oblige you to do any thing for me, you ſhall make me know it in this: *I* have buſineſs with you, and 'twill be time enough to morrow for you to go. Monſieur prayed her if ſhe had any thing to ſay to him, not to delay it; and that in another occaſion he would be ready to teſtifie the reſpect he had for her, but that he could not ſtay now. We ſhall ſee that, ſaid ſhe, and leaving him, ſhe haſten'd to the Abby, to give order that his Horſes ſhould be ſtopp'd; but thoſe that had it in commiſſion, came a little too late, for he was juſt going, and ſeeing the endeavours that were uſed to hinder him, and that he wanted time to pack up his Baggage, he choſe rather to leave his Servant behind him, and went to lodge

lodge that Night a League from the Abby, where he bid him come to him the next morning.

The Abbeſs that but a moment before would not only have been glad never to ſee him, but to have revenged her ſelf upon him with deſtruction, had not now the power to bring her ſelf to conſent to his departure: How weak is anger againſt an object that is uſed to charm us? and how ill can a heart revenge it ſelf of what it loves? when the Lover ſuffers moſt, in the ſufferings of the beloved.

The Abbeſs heard of Monſieurs departure with a ſenſible diſpleaſure, and gave ſevere words to them ſhe had ſent to ſtop him, for letting him go. When they told her that his Servant was not gone, ſhe bid him be call'd to her, whom by ſtrength of Preſents, ſhe drew to tell where his Maſter was: She was eas'd of half her pain, when ſhe knew that he lay but a league from

her. Her paſſion, which at that time would have made her attempt any thing, put into her head a deſign, which was not pardonable in one of her habit, except we will pardon all things to love. This little God uſes not to inſpire us ſo weakly, as to leave it in our power to conſult reaſon or juſtice; and there is not any that they baulk, who are poſſeſſed with him. The Maid that I have already ſpoke to you of, that was her particular confident, came into her Chamber, and ſeeing her in a profound ſtudy, believed ſhe had committed a fault, and went to excuſe her ſelf for interrupting her. No, no, my dear Companion, (ſaid the Abbeſs to her, for ſo 'twas ſhe called her) you come more luckily than you think, and I have need of you; and I may ſay that 'tis from you alone I can hope aſſiſtance in the pains that I ſuffer. The Maid anſwered with much acknowledgment to the favour

vour that the Abbeſs did her, to conſider her at that rate; and aſſured her with a thouſand proteſtations of her fidelity, and that there was not any thing that ſhe would not undertake to ſerve her. The Abbeſs embrac'd her moſt tenderly, ſigh'd, wept, and touch'd ſo nearly the heart of her dear Confident, that ſhe was impatient to know what ſhe was to do for her; and with tears in her eyes, beſeech'd her to tell her, for what it was that ſhe was afflicted. You are not ignorant of any thing that paſſes in my heart, (ſaid the ſad Lady to her with an Air extremely deplorable) nor with what ingratitude Monſieur *Le Chevalier* has of late repayed the tenderneſs that I had for him. This Traytor, after all my kindneſſes, has been ſo baſe to go away without my conſent, and even without bidding me Adieu. You ought to ſee, Madam, in that (reply'd the Maid diſcreetly) how unworthy he

is of your favours, and that he merits not any longer your eſteem. I am reſolved to do as you ſay (anſwered the Abbeſs) and am ſufficiently diſpos'd to it; but the pain that I ſuffer at preſent, and that I cannot conquer, is but to have the pleaſure to eaſe my full heart with reproaching him with his Treaſons, and that he go not away, perhaps, in the opinion that I am not yet perſwaded of his perfidiouſneſs. I would have the ſatisfaction of making him bluſh for his laſt fault, which I have not yet acquainted thee with. If thou loveſt me (added ſhe with her ſhaming air) thou wilt find ſome way whereby I may ſatisfie this deſire; and, in fine, break off intirely with the moſt ungrateful of all men: Without that, my Child, *I* cannot promiſe thee to live long in the diſpleaſure and rage I am in, and thou art like to loſe ſuddenly the beſt of thy Friends. his Maid, who in intrigues of Love,

Love, was not the moſt skilful in the world, and ſaw not yet into the depth of the Abbeſs's deſign; propoſed to her to write a Letter of reproaches to this Traytor; but this ſatisfaction was too weak for a paſſionate Lover: One can never expreſs ones ſelf well by writing (ſaid ſhe) upon a Subject of this nature: To puniſh as we ought, one that is ſo culpable, the Perſon offended muſt, with her own mouth, make all the reproaches he merits, that ſhe may have the advantage of ſeeing his confuſion. Ha! (ſaid the Maid) Well then, Madam, What will you do? Stay to expect his return? The innocence of this Maid almoſt made the Abbeſs laugh. Can we (replyed ſhe) keep anger ſo long againſt one that has once pleas'd us? No, no, if thou wilt believe me (purſued ſhe, with a bluſh that covered all her face) we will not defer our revenge ſo long a time: I have courage enough to execute

the deſign, if thou haſt enough to follow me: We will go find out this Traytor that is but a League off, and thou ſhalt be witneſs with what ſcorn I will manage the buſineſs; and if it be poſſible to overwhelm a man with reproaches, Monſieur *Le Chevalier* ſhall be he. So hardy a propoſal at firſt ſtrangely ſurpriz'd this Maid: She that could ſcarce go in the Night thro' the Monaſtery without ſtarts and fears, could not but think it dangerous and terrible, to expoſe themſelves alone to thoſe troubleſom accidents they might meet with in the road: But the Abbeſs repreſented the enterprize ſo eaſie, and ſo unlikely of any troubleſom rencounter in that little way they had to go, and ſo fair a Night, that at laſt ſhe perſwaded her, and made her love the novelty of the diverſion. The Abbeſs, extremely raviſhed to have gained her dear companion, thought now only where

where to get Horſes. She would not make uſe of her own, that her going might be the more ſecret, but choſe rather to have recourſe to her Farmer, that lived about a thouſand paces off her; to whom ſhe preſently diſpatch'd her Valet, that had always been very faithful to her, and that ſhe reſolved ſhould wait upon her in this Journy. Her order was to tell the Farmer, that ſhe had need of three Horſes, and that he ſhould not fail to ſend them her that Night. Her Valet departed the ſame moment, whilſt the Ladies went to prepare themſelves to get a Horſeback. The firſt thing the Abbeſs did, was to give out that ſhe was not very well, and would go to Bed; giving leave to all thoſe that waited on her to do the like, and kept only her dear companion with her, as ſhe often uſed to do. So ſoon as they were alone, they began to undreſs themſelves, and to change their holy habits for thoſe

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of the Country, of which the Abbeſs had very handſom ones: She adorn'd her ſelf with as much care, as if ſhe had been going to ſome publick Aſſembly: She was the laſt dreſs'd, but there could not be any thing more fine and gallant than ſhe: Her Apartment was not far from the Garden, and they could go to it without noiſe, or being ſeen of any, as they did; and took with all ſpeed a way to the back door, where the Valet was to be with their Horſes. One would have ſaid that had ſeen them, that they had been two Amazons, that went to aſſault ſome place, they did ſo encourage one another. When they were come to the door, and the Abbeſs, who had the Key, had open'd it, finding no body there, they began to be ſoon impatient of the Valet's ſtay; but, at laſt, they heard a noiſe of Horſes, which gave them ſome hopes; but we are often deceived in thoſe things

things which we desire most: As the noise increased, they began to fear they were in an error, for the Valet that they expected was not to come that way; but the Abbess, who had a little more resolution than her fellow-adventurer, that even trembled with fear, endeavoured to re assure her, telling her that without doubt it was he, but that he had taken a compass not to meet any body by the way, and that this was the occasion of his staying so long; bidding her go two or three steps, to see if she were not in the right: This poor Maid, that every thing terrified had not the courage to do as the Abbess commanded her; and beseech'd her most humbly, not to put her valour to this tryal; and that she could not leave her a step without dying, for the shake of every leaf put her into a mortal fright. The Abbess could not forbear laughing at her cowardice, and bid her not to fear any

thing, for ſhe would go along with her. Our two valorous Adventurers, with prodigious courage, went ſome paces to meet thoſe that came; but they had no ſooner diſcovered that they were two men that rid a-pace towards them, but they run away without ſo much as remembring to ſhut the Garden door after them, never ſtopping till they arrived at laſt near the Monaſtery, but ſo out of breath, that they could ſcarcely ſpeak: Their courage return'd a little when they ſaw themſelves at home, and panting with their hands on their ſides, they began to laugh at their ill grounded fear of two Men that ſought only their way. After a' little reaſoning upon the caſe, they took heart and returned the ſecond time to the door, where they found two Horſes tyed to a Tree, without any body by them. The Abbeſs, when ſhe had look'd well on both ſides her, without diſcovering any body, was

in ſome pain to divine, why theſe Horſes ſhould be here without her Valet; but ſhe believed that he was not gone far, and that they muſt wait for him, concluding (as it is eaſie to make any concluſion to our own advantage) that theſe muſt of neceſſity be her Farmers Horſes; and this was not wholly unlikely, for who elſe could be imagined to leave two Horſes ſo: But the Valet came not, and the Abbeſs dyed with impatience at it; time preſſed her ſo much, that ſhe was afraid there was not Night enough left to execute her deſign. This was a great torment to her: She would have ſworn a thouſand times (but that Abbeſſes uſe not to ſwear) that theſe were her Farmers Horſes, that ſhe knew them, and that certainly her Valet was hindred with getting another Horſe. 'Tis true, this might be, but 'twas poſſible alſo theſe might be the Horſes of the two men they ſaw; but on that point ſhe would

would not reaſon, for ordinarily we love not to be convinced of what we do not deſire; and we often chuſe to be deceived with a falſe ſhew of reaſon, rather than to be certain of a truth that does not agree with us.

Our moſt amorous and impatient Abbeſs, ſeeing her Valet did not come, told her faithful Companion, that they could not ſtay any longer for him, and that he was not ſo neceſſary to them, but that they might go without him, and he might come after if he would. She conſented to all that ſhe pleaſed, and our two Adventurers mounted without an Eſquire, and in leſs than an hour arrived, without any wicked adventure, at Monſieur *Le Chevalier*'s Inn. The Abbeſs knock'd at the door, and inquired for a Gentleman that lodged there: They told her that indeed ſuch a one came there that night, but that he went away again about an hour after, with a Valet

Valet that brought him a Letter. She queſtion'd again the Maſter of the Houſe what way they had taken, what Livery the Valet was in, if the Gentleman was to return quickly, if he had eat, till in fine, ſhe came to queſtion him, if he had appeared ſad or joyful. But the Hoſt knew not what to ſay to her, all that he knew was, that he was not likely to return that Night, and that he had not left any Orders with them. Never any one was ſo afflicted as the poor Abbeſs then was: A thouſand thoughts oppreſt her at once, of which there was not one that overwhelm'd her not with trouble: What numbers of inquietudes, what cruel ſuſpicions, well or ill grounded, what rage, what deſpair, to have promis'd her ſelf ſo much ſatisfaction in coming, after all the charming Chimera's that ſhe had fram'd in her Mind, to return more deſolate than ever? Her companion, who ſuffered extremely

tremely to ſee her ſo ſtrangely afflicted, would have been glad ſhe could have comforted her. Why do you torment your ſelf, Madam, (ſaid ſhe to her) 'tis true, we have loſt our labour, but who knows whether that is not better for us, than if we had ſucceeded in our deſign, and have found Monſieur *Le Chevalier:* You know him, Madam, and that he is not the diſcreeteſt Perſon in the world; perhaps this viſit might have been talk'd of, we are at leaſt aſſured, that we have taken a Frolick that none knows of. That none knows of, (replied this diſtracted Lover?) alas! ſeeſt thou not that my Siſter knew our deſign, and that 'twas ſhe without doubt that ſent this Valet, to advertize him of what we intended, and to oblige him to avoid me? But how is it poſſible (anſwered her companion) that this ſhould be as you ſay? If Monſieur has been ſo long gone from this place as the Hoſt tells us,

you

you had then ſcarce framed the deſign of coming hither. But what cauſe (replyed the Abbeſs) wilt thou then find for his ſudden departure? In fine, whatever her Companion ſaid to her, and whatever arguments her wit could frame to perſwade her, ſhe always ended with ſaying her Siſter had done the buſineſs, and that nothing could have oblig'd him to leave his Lodging at that hour, but ſhe. This thought furiouſly tormented her, her jealouſie was augmented by it, and ſhe was aſſaulted with ſo many pains at once, that ſhe ſaw on all ſides her nothing but deſpair. How far different was it with her now, to what it was ſome moments before; when ſhe was fill'd with the joyful expectation of ſeeing her dear *Chevalier*? Whatever her Companion ſaid to her, to divert her muſings, ſhe anſwered her only with ſighs.

Being at length got home again, they

they were a little troubled how to diſpoſe of their Horſes; but at laſt, they judg'd it the ſafeſt and eaſieſt way to draw them into the Garden, and tye them to a Tree till it was day, that they might ſend them back to the Farmer: After that, they had no more to do, than to go ſtrait to the Convent; but they were ſcarce come to the middle of the Garden, when they fancied that they heard people talk: The Maid, who was three or four paces before the Abbeſs, and had not her Spirit ſo pre-occupyed, was the firſt that perceived it, and turning to her all of a ſudden, extremely ſurprized, told her that, aſſuredly, there was ſome body in the Garden. The Abbeſs hearkned very attentively, and found that ſhe was not deceived: 'Twas now that all her pains were ſuſpended, and that ſhe labour'd not under any but curioſity. Whatever cauſe we have of trouble, if we meet with any thing that ſurprizes,

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it diverts our pains for the time, and they are, as it were, aſleep in us. All her ſuſpicion awak'd at this noiſe, ſhe knew that only ſhe and her Siſter had a Key from the Convent to the Garden; and this reaſon alone was ſufficient to make her believe, that 'twas certainly ſhe and Monſieur *Le Chevalier*, that entertained an amorous converſation; at leaſt, ſhe was reſolved to be ſatisfied. Jealouſie ſerves inſtead of courage to women, and Love makes them hazard every thing. This Lady, that perhaps upon another occaſion, would have been terrified with leſs cauſe, now feared not to go forward, to diſcover if her Suſpicions were true or no, bidding the Maid (who trembled with fear) to follow her ſoftly. They went ſo lightly as they could, under the covert of a Hedg, (for the Night was very clear, and they might be ſeen at a diſtance) towards a thick Arbor from whence they

they were a little troubled how to diſpoſe of their Horſes; but at laſt, they judg'd it the ſafeſt and eaſieſt way to draw them into the Garden, and tye them to a Tree till it was day, that they might ſend them back to the Farmer: After that, they had no more to do, than to go ſtrait to the Convent; but they were ſcarce come to the middle of the Garden, when they fancied that they heard people talk: The Maid, who was three or four paces before the Abbeſs, and had not her Spirit ſo pre-occupyed, was the firſt that perceived it, and turning to her all of a ſudden, extremely ſurprized, told her that, aſſuredly, there was ſome body in the Garden. The Abbeſs hearkned very attentively, and found that ſhe was not deceived: 'Twas now that all her pains were ſuſpended, and that ſhe labour'd not under any but curioſity. Whatever cauſe we have of trouble, if we meet with any thing that ſurprizes,

it

it diverts our pains for the time, and they are, as it were, asleep in us. All her suspicion awak'd at this noise, she knew that only she and her Sister had a Key from the Convent to the Garden; and this reason alone was sufficient to make her believe, that 'twas certainly she and Monsieur *Le Chevalier*, that entertained an amorous conversation; at least, she was resolved to be satisfied. Jealousie serves instead of courage to women, and Love makes them hazard every thing. This Lady, that perhaps upon another occasion, would have been terrified with less cause, now feared not to go forward, to discover if her Suspicions were true or no, bidding the Maid (who trembled with fear) to follow her softly. They went so lightly as they could, under the covert of a Hedg, (for the Night was very clear, and they might be seen at a distance) towards a thick Arbor from whence they

they heard the voice. The Abbeſs ſoon knew Monſieur *Le Chevalier*'s, but could not underſtand diſtinctly what he ſaid; therefore advancing a little forward, ſhe heard her Siſter ſpeak: But do not you conſider, (ſaid ſhe) to what you expoſe me? and how you hazard your ſelf? for without ſpeaking of what has happen'd to ſo many, other unhappy Maids that have abandon'd themſelves on the Faith of Men, whereof there have been but too many deceiv'd; but granting you to have more honeſty and honour than all the World beſides, think what diſcourſe my flight will occaſion; the furious ſearch my Parents will make for us, and into what ſtrange miſery I ſhould caſt you, if you ſhould fall into their hands: My God! (continued ſhe) once again attempt not any thing ſo dangerous! Leave me rather to dye here with grief, than precipitate our ſelves to ſo hazardous an enterprize. You will

have me then (anſwered the other, that the Abbeſs knew at firſt to be Monſieur *Le Chevalier*) to expoſe you to all the ills that Jealouſie can contrive againſt you; to all the affronts and injuries that you may receive from your furious Siſter, and a hundred other things that makes me tremble for you: You know that I have no longer the liberty to ſee you here, and that it is forbidden me; and that I cannot for ſhame preſent my ſelf here any more, after the ill treatment that I have received; and it is to ſay that you will have me dye. If you love me, Madam, —— If I love you (interrupted ſhe) you know it but too well: If you would not have me doubt of it, (purſued Monſieur *Le Chevalier*) and that my Love and Aſſiduity have merited that you ſhould do every thing for me, as you have told me ſeveral times, give me this demonſtrative proof of it: Let us render our ſelves happy,

py, my charming Queen, since 'tis in our power; our flight is easie, your Valet and mine are at the Garden door, who attends us with Horses; all things favour us, and I promise you in three hours to put you in a place, where not only none shall know where we are, but where there would not be any thing to be fear'd if they should. Monsieur was then silent, to see what answer his dear *Egidia* would make him. Get you gone, Monsieur, (said she, sighing) for I'm afraid if you press me longer, that you'l obtain of me more than I ought to grant: I beg of you to go, before my weakness misleads me from my duty. Do you your self, if you are more reasonable than I, as you ought to be, fortifie my heart against your self, have pity on my sinking virtue, and rest content with the glory that nothing but your self is able to resist you; for I confess that I am not assured, that I have the power of my self

ſelf to withſtand you and Love. Adieu, leave me. After theſe words they heard her weep, and Monſieur, Let your ſelf be overcome (ſaid he) My Dear Soul! Let your ſelf be perſwaded by a Love ſo tender and ſo paſſionate: Give up your ſelf to my care and my fidelity, that is too well known to you to doubt of it. There was not any thing he omitted to ſay that might gain her, which tore the heart of the Abbeſs, as it tender'd hers. It is not neceſſary to repreſent the different paſſions of theſe two Ladies: The Love, the Languors, and tender Sighs of the youngeſt, no more than the deſpight, Shame, and Rage of the eldeſt: Who yet had the patience to hearken to the end of a diſcourſe, as cruel for her as it was charming for her Siſter. She ſaw her wholly diſpos'd to do as Monſieur *Le Chevalier* would have her, and going to prepare her ſelf to go away with him, for ſhe was to fit her ſelf with

with a habit more ſuitable the liberty of the Country, than that ſhe wore; and went to her Chamber to change it. The Abbeſs let her paſs, and ſtirr'd not from the place where ſhe was of ſome time after, that (her thoughts labouring of a deſign) ſhe took a conſiderable compaſs, to come, with her Mask on her Face, into the Arbor where Monſieur *Le Chevalier* was; who (as ſhe would have it) taking her for her Siſter, embraced her with all tenderneſs. How charming are you, Madam, (ſaid the tranſported Lover) to make me attend ſo little in this extreme impatience I had to ſee you return! Come, let us go, ſince nothing oppoſes our deſign, and ſerve our ſelves of Fortune, now ſhe is for us. After theſe words, he led the way, becauſe they went in a path that but one could walk in. It is eaſie to imagine the little pleaſure, or rather the deſpair, wherewith the Abbeſs receiv'd

receiv'd ſo much ſweetneſs that was not deſign'd for her; and what violence ſhe uſed to reſtrain her anger, this being not a time to let it appear, nor make her ſelf known. You ought not to wonder at Monſieurs miſtake, conſidering 'twas Night, and that there was little difference in the ſtature of theſe two Ladies, beſides a thouſand other things which help'd to deceive him.

As this was not a proper place to entertain her in, he ſaid but little to her, and thought only of ſecuring her and himſelf where he had deſign'd; and to what he did ſay ſhe anſwer'd him not a word, whereof he took no notice, having his mind ſo full of his enterprize. They went in this manner quite to the Garden door, where Monſieur was not a little ſurpriz'd to find it ſhut; but ſhe quickly eas'd him of his pain, and took the key that ſhe had about her and opened it. By what

what means, or rather by what happineſs, (ſaid he then to her, knowing that none but the Abbeſs kept that Key) came you by this Key? She anſwer'd him no more than before, at which he ſtayed not but haſtned to get a Horſeback; but his Horſes were not there, and his Valet, who had been looking them, told him, with a very ſad tone, that he did not know what was become of them, and that he had been more than two hours in purſuit of them to no purpoſe; that he was come to tell him of it, and going again to ſeek them, for he knew they could not be loſt, and that no body went that way. I cou'd never learn the Abbeſs's deſign, whether what ſhe did was only ſubtilly to prevent this enterprize, or whether ſhe would in earneſt have taken the place of her Siſter; but this I can tell you, that as ſoon as ſhe heard what the Valet ſaid of the Horſes, ſhe return'd into the Garden,

Garden, and ſhut the door upon her. Never was man more ſurpriz'd than this Lover, ſcarce could he believe what he ſaw, that his Miſtreſs ſhould leave him in ſuch a manner, and what was more ſtrange to him, the ſhutting the door after her. I believe that none but himſelf can deſcribe his thoughts in ſo cruel an adventure. He knock'd five or ſix times at the door! call'd his Miſtreſs! complained of Love and Deſtiny! Curſt! Swore! threatned to kill his Valet! and, in ſhort, there was no extravagancy that his rage made him not to commit. In the mean time, the Abbeſs return'd towards her companion full of joy, for what ſhe had done, and to hear her trayterous *Le Chevalier* in that paſſion. She was not yet come to the Arbor, that I ſpoke of, when ſhe heard the noiſe of one coming that way, and who, in all likelihood, muſt be her Siſter, whom with a ſlow pace, ſhe went to meet. This poor Lady,

that had not all the courage in the world, and who, beſides the fear ſhe was in, and that attends all ſuch actions, walk'd muſing upon a thouſand obſtacles and accidents that ſhe might meet with in the way. She no ſooner caſt her eyes upon the Abbeſs, than ſhe believed ſhe was a Spirit, and trembling with fear, ſhe made a dreadful out-cry; and flew with all her might back to the Convent. The Abbeſs acquitted her ſelf very agreeably of theſe adventures, and believed ſhe was in part revenged of the diſpleaſures her Siſter had cauſed her; whom ſhe let flee, and that while return'd to ſeek her companion, who expected her with extreme impatience, being furiouſly terrified to be alone in the midſt of the Garden, expoſed to all the noiſes ſhe heard, and even aſſaſſinated with fear: She related to her all that ſhe had done ſince ſhe left her, how ſhe had deceiv'd Monſieur *Le Chevalier*, and

and terrified her Sister; wherewith they were very merry, and laugh'd heartily. They stayed a little, to see if she would return, but 'twas in vain; for she, poor Lady, was so dismay'd, that she almost dyed with the fright; and was forc'd by it, to keep her Bed a long time. The Abbess and her companion retir'd at last, and took care that none should go out of the Convent, having double lock'd the door of it.

This is (said Madam *d' Eyrac*, in concluding her Story) all the particulars that I know of these Ladies adventures with Monsieur *Le Chevalier*. He can tell you now what I have not been inform'd of: I will only add, that 'twas no sooner day, than the Abbess sent for her Valet, and ask'd him what was become of him the Night past, and why he had not been at the door she appointed him? The Fellow told her, that he had been with the Farmer,

and his Horſes were not at home, and that at his return he ſaw two Gentlemen going into the Garden, whom he durſt not come near, for fear of being known; and that returning half an hour after, he found the door ſhut. The relation of this fellow finiſh'd the diſcovery, and the Abbeſs queſtion'd no longer, but they were Monſieur *Le Chevalier*'s Horſes that ſhe had made uſe of. She gave order to her Valet, to turn them out of the Garden, but ſo as they might be found.

'Tis from you (added Madam *d' Eyrac*, turning to Monſieur *Le Chevalier*) that we muſt expect the reſt: All the company made him the ſame requeſt, ſo that he could not deny them. Madam *d' Eyrac* (purſued he) has told you ſo much, that I have no more to do than to cloſe up the Story. You muſt know then, that after my ill treatment in the Garden by *Egidia* and the Abbeſs, by whoſe appointment I came there,

here, I prepared all things for my departure, but first I writ this Letter to *Egidia.*

I Know not, Madam, what I have done to be so cruelly treated as I have been. The Abbess desired to have an interview with me, and though she had expresly commanded me to conceal it from you, I forbore not to give you an account of it by a Letter, which I sent by my Valet. Is this to betray you? I see well you design my death! Ah! Well, Madam, you shall be satisfied, but shall not have the pleasure to see it, for I stay not here a moment; but you shall quickly hear the success of your unjust proceedings, and if the death of the faithfull'st of Lovers is capable of touching such a heart as yours, I can promise my self that you will, in a little time, repent of having given it me. Adieu, too cruel fair! and Adieu for ever.

As I finiſh'd my Letter, I ſaw people come from the Abbeſs, who, after having in vain intreated me to ſtay that night, would have hinder'd in good earneſt my going away; but ſeeing me upon the point of being angry, they oppoſed me no longer: But my Valet was ſomewhat long, and I was afraid the Abbeſs would come her ſelf, to try once again her power over me, which conſtrained me to depart, and leave him with my baggage. I gave him my Letter to *Egidia*, with order to deliver it into her own hands, and bring me an Anſwer if ſhe'd write one; and thus I forſook a place, that for a years time, was the dear Scene of all my pleaſures, loſt, as I may ſay, with ſadneſs, and overwhelmed with different pains, without coming to my ſelf, or recovering my Sences in all the way between the Abby and my Lodging. It may eaſily be gueſs'd,

gueſs'd, that when I came there, I deſired neither to eat nor ſleep: True Lovers, in the eſtate I was reduc'd unto, feaſt only upon Tears, and Sleep avoids them as a mortal enemy. 'Twas in the heat of theſe cruel moments, that one came to tell me there was a Valet below would ſpeak with me: I bid that they ſhould bring him into my chamber, and ſaw that 'twas one that belong'd to my dear *Egidia*. I embraced him kindly, who, after he had complemented me from his Miſtreſs, gave me a Letter, wherein I found theſe words.

YOu do not think I wiſh your death; you know me too well, and are ſufficiently perſwaded that if you had done me all the injuries in the world, you have but a word to ſay to make me believe you have not wrong'd me. I know not what Letter you mean, for 'tis above three days ſince I had any from you: Come and tell me what

it is, for I shall dye with displeasure if you leave me thus, with the fear that I have done you wrong. I hear that my Sister could not prevail with you to stay with us this evening; if you love me better than you do her, will you not do something more at my request? Return, I conjure you, I am of a humour to pardon you all things, and if you would have me believe that you love me, you will give me this proof of it; for I shall not sleep till I see you, and will expect you two hours after midnight, in the Great Arbor in the Garden, and I will judge of the force of your Love, by the little time you make me stay for you. Adieu.

So soon as I had read this Letter, I got a Horseback, and arrived in a very short time under the Walls of the Garden, where I knew there was a place that I could get over with ease: But having found the door open, I profited my self of the occasion, which, I confess, surpriz'd me

me at first, but upon second thoughts I imagin'd, that it happened thro' the contrivance of *Egidia*. I bid her Valet tye our Horses to the foot of a Tree, and go to advertize my Servant to prepare himself to come away with me in an hours time. After I had given this order, I went, or rather flew to the Arbor, where I was to find my dear *Egidia*. 'Twas then that the Abbess, returning to the Garden door, found my Horses that she took for her Farmers, and made use of them to make me that extraordinary visit.

But not to dwell upon a little Story, that begins already to seem tedious, I will only tell you, that *Egidia* received me in the Arbor with a joy, that made me forget all the ill usage wherewith she had so lately treated me. We let some time pass in transports and tenderness, and the fairest day in the world was never so agreeable to me, as that charming Night. When I spoke

to her of the Letter I had writ to her, and that she assured me that she never received it; we concluded at first that 'twas fall'n into the Abbess's hands; and that my Valet had either been guilty of a mistake, or betrayed me. In fine, after much justification on both sides; after, I say, many new amities, sighs, and languors, that Lovers abound with in a happy reconciliation, I proposed to her to steal her away, as you have heard from Madam *d'Eyrac*; and press'd her with so much earnestness, that in the end, she consented, and went to prepare her self to follow me. I confess her quick return a little surpriz'd me, but who would then have thought of Madam the Abbess? I saw her masqu'd, in the habit of the Country, that she did not scruple to go with me; and, in a word, if my Horses had been ready, I do not doubt but I should have carried her away instead of her Sister.

I will

I will not inlarge, by telling you with what aſtoniſhment I was ſeiz'd to ſee her go back again into the Garden, and ſhut the door after her: At firſt I believed that ſhe only deſign'd to make ſport with me, but as the rallery laſted a little too long for people that had no time to loſe, and that ſhe did not return; in ſpight of me I concluded this was no longer jeſt. I thought that ſhe had conſented to follow me only to deceive me, and that I had been the moſt abuſed man in the world. 'Twas then that ſhame, deſpight, and diſdain, excited terrible tempeſts in my Soul, which together with the diſpleaſure of not knowing what was become of my Horſes, nor what I ſhould do with my ſelf, put me in ſo furious a paſſion, that I vented a thouſand complaints and reproaches againſt the perfidious *Egidia*. I conſider'd this as the greateſt affront that a Man could receive; I examin'd every particular, and

and there was no circumſtance that ſeemed not impoſſible to me. In this humor I took my way to the Village, that being the beſt courſe I could then think of; and went to lodge at my ancient Hoſts, where I paſs'd a much more cruel Night than the firſt time I had been in that Houſe. I called to mind all the cares and ſervices I had rendred to this ingrate; and all the falſe promiſes of amity that ſhe had made me; and being aſtoniſhed not to have found out the lightneſs of her humor, I accuſed my ſelf of ſtupidity and blindneſs, adding to my firſt deſpair, an indignation againſt my ſelf. What extravagant diſcourſes had I with my ſelf that Night! What numbers of unlikely deſigns I framed! In truth, one is liable to many follies when one loves extremely. It was no ſooner day, than I call'd to my Valet for Ink and Paper to write to her, but it was with ſo much trouble and diſorder, that

that whatever I writ I defaced it as faſt. Nothing pleaſed me, ſometimes I fancied I complain'd too ſweetly, and ſometimes I feared to offend her; ſometimes I reſolved to take leave of her for ever, and a moment after I repented of that reſolution: But at laſt I writ thus to her.

YOu ought, Madam, rather not to have obliged me, than repent of it ſo ſoon; nor to have come to the door with me, to forſake me in ſuch a manner: 'Twas my ill fortune that my Horſes were loſt, you ſaw 'twas not my fault, and you ought rather to have comforted me, than treat me with that cruelty, as to leave me without ſaying a word to me: But above all, why did you ſhut the door? Or why did you flee from me? Did you fear any violence from me? And wherefore did you promiſe me ſo much happineſs, if you did not intend it? I ſee well what I ought to conclude from all this, and that I

was deceived to believe you ever lov'd me. The Maſque is off now, and without accuſing you of Ingratitude or Perfidy, I leave you to make your ſelf the reproaches you merit, whilſt I go to to waſte the remainder of my miſerable life, in ſome place more happy for me than this. Adieu.

This Letter was given her by her Valet, who an hour after brought me another from her, telling me withal that ſhe was very ill, which I might eaſily perceive by her writing, that I could ſcarce read; and where I found theſe words.

ALl that you have writ to me terrifies me in ſuch a manner, that I believe I ſhall dye with it: I know not what door you talk of, and all I can ſay is, that I never ſaw you after I parted with you in the Arbor, but met a Spirit as I was coming; the fright whereof will I think kill me: 'Twas certainly the ſame fantaſm that you

you ſpeak of, and which, without doubt came to you in my ſhape. Behold I how God corrects thoſe that are not wiſe! I have not ſlept ſince, and I always fancy I ſee the Spirit that purſued me. I ſee the hand of Heaven in it, that I have ſo long offended, let us profit of its advice, my dear Monſieur, let's endeavour to be wiſe; for my part, I am wholly reſolved to lead a better life, and if you love me you'l do ſo too. We were going to ruine our ſelves, and God would preſerve us, let us render him the thanks we owe him for his goodneſs: See me not of ſome days, I will think a little of my ſalvation, and do invite you to do the ſame, and to look upon me no longer but as one of your friends. Adieu.

I was exceedingly ſurpriz'd with the reading of this Letter; but to tell you the truth, if ſhe had not been very ſick, I ſhould have taken all ſhe ſaid for chimæra's and pretences that ſhe made uſe of to excuſe her

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you speak of, and which, without doubt came to you in my shape. Behold how God corrects those that are not wise! I have not slept since, and I always fancy I see the Spirit that pursued me. I see the hand of Heaven in it, that I have so long offended, let us profit of its advice, my dear Monsieur, let's endeavour to be wise; for my part, I am wholly resolved to lead a better life, and if you love me you'l do so too. We were going to ruine our selves, and God would preserve us, let us render him the thanks we owe him for his goodness: See me not of some days, I will think a little of my salvation, and do invite you to do the same, and to look upon me no longer but as one of your friends. Adieu.

I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the reading of this Letter; but to tell you the truth, if she had not been very sick, I should have taken all she said for chimæra's and pretences that she made use of to excuse her

her inconſtancy: Though I never gave much faith to ſuch fooliſh ſtories as that of the Fantaſm; yet when I reflected upon what ſhe aſſured me, that ſhe had not ſeen me ſince ſhe left me in the Arbor, I began to be afraid to examine all that had happened to me with this pretended Spirit: I remembred very well it had not ſaid a word to me, that it was come ſooner than I could have expected *Egidia*; I fancyed even that it had opened the door without a key, and that it vaniſh'd when it left me: In a word, I yielded inſenſibly to that error, which ſerved to make me think in good earneſt of my Conſcience, and to make my peace with God. I was ſome days without ever going to the Convent, to avoid the ſight of the Abbeſs, though ſhe ſent ſeveral times to deſire me to take up my Lodgings at her houſe as formerly; excuſing my ſelf ſo well as I could, till I received this Letter, that

Egidia

Egidia made one of her Friends write to me.

I Believe God will grant me the mercy of a longer time for repentance: The Physicians have some hopes of my recovery, however it happens come and see me, to the end that if Death parts us, I may, in dying, have at least this consolation of discharging my duty, by telling you things that I am obliged to tell you. I expect you. Adieu.

This scene (pursued Monsieur *Le Chevalier*) will divert you but little, it being all of tears. I went to see her, and I avow to you I was so sensibly touch'd with her condition, that I was in one little better my self. I could not master my self, nor forbear to ease my afflicted mind by a torrent of tears: All those that were present bore me company, and none but the Abbess that was not moved to see me thus afflicted. This poor creature, who suffered

ſuffered with me, made ſome efforts to ſay things to me the moſt kind and tender in the world: She ſpoke to me as if ſhe were to dye that day, and certainly none thought ſhe could live much longer: But Heaven would preſerve her to oblige the world with a moſt rare example of conſtancy, and a moſt honeſt and ſincere friendſhip, wherein we have ſince lived.

You know not perhaps (ſaid Madam *d' Eyrac* to him) that none contributed ſo much to her recovery as I; which was in this manner.

This Maid, or if you pleaſe, the Companion of the Abbeſs, which, as I told you more than once, had much confidence in me, failed not to give me an account of this laſt adventure in the Garden, and the fear your Miſtreſs was in, that it was not hard for me to gueſs the cauſe of her illneſs, and to find out means for her cure. Every body obſerv'd

obſerv'd an extraordinary trouble in her eyes, and ſuch diſorder in her words, as though ſhe were in a continual ſtudy: I pitied her extremely, and though it was an injuſtice to my Friend to declare the ſecret wherewith ſhe had truſted me, I believed that in the extremity whereto this poor Lady was reduced, I ought not to omit any thing for her recovery: I took my time when there was none with her but a young Wench that ſerv'd her, and that I could not ſuſpect; and ask'd her with an air of confidence, if her indiſpoſition proceeded not from ſome diſturbance in her Mind, and if ſhe believed me not enough her friend, to truſt me with it. She look'd fixtly on me and bluſh'd, believing I meant to ſpeak to her of Monſieur *Le Chevalier*; but when I told her afterwards that I knew the cauſe of her illneſs perhaps better than ſhe her ſelf, and that I could deliver her from the fear ſhe had

had been in, in the Garden, ſhe raiſed her ſelf of a ſudden upon her Bed, My God! Madam, (ſaid ſhe) is it poſſible that in my ravings I have ſpoke of any ſuch things! No, no, (anſwered I interrupting her) I know it by another way, and I believe no body has heard any ſuch thing from you: The perſons that cauſed you this fear, told it me; and I believed I ought not to leave you longer in this pain: I imagine you'l be ſo diſcreet, as I ſhall have no reaſon to complain of you, and that you'l uſe as you ought the confidence I have in you. She promiſed me ſecrecy, and I told her all that had paſs'd in the Garden, as I was inform'd of it; at which ſhe was ſo aſtoniſh'd ſhe could ſcarce believe it, if *I* had not told her all that had happened to her ſelf, to the diſcourſe between her and Monſieur *Le Chevalier*. She bluſh'd at it, and I ſaw well ſhe was aſham'd that I knew this particular of her Life:

Life: But to be ſhort, ſince that time her Mind was compoſed by degrees, till it came to its firſt ſettledneſs. She recovered her health, and in a little time her ſtrength alſo: I do not know how ſhe has ſince carried her ſelf towards you, but this I know, that ſhe made ſtrong reſolutions, though ſhe could not forbear loving you, to do it in ſuch a manner as ſhould not offend God.

I'll aſſure you, Madam, (anſwered Monſieur *Le Chevalier*) ſhe had kept them, and that our friendſhip is no more than what might be between a Brother and Siſter; though in truth, I have had much pain to reduce my ſelf to it, but at laſt I have brought my will to hers. Tell us a little, I beg of you, (ſaid the Marchioneſs *de Sandal*) what you did with the Abbeſs, and how you were rid of her. I believe (purſu'd Monſieur *Le Chevalier*) that the Abbeſs was furiouſly exaſperated ſince

ſince that laſt evening, and that what ſhe heard when I was in the Arbor, perfected her cure. I always avoided being alone with her that little time I was in the Abby; and when I took my leave of her, 'twas in the preſence of five or ſix Ladies, her Friends.

Thus Monſieur *Le Chevalier* finiſh'd his Hiſtory, to the general ſatisfaction of the Company.

A Catalogue